



**Start of Henry E. Seling Family  
Collection  
AR 11894**

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AR 11894 VI

Henry E. Seling Family Collection, undated

LEAVE FROM EUROPE

by

Henry E. Seling  
and  
Flora V. Seling

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I LEAVE FROM EUROPE

O ur Definite Leave from Europe - Fall 1939 -

Told by Henry E. Seling- written by Flora V. Seling

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Late in December 1938, I was released from Dachau Concentration Camp on the grounds that my business in Lörrach, Baden, Germany, which had been founded in 1881 by my father-in-law, had not yet been "transferred into Aryan hands". Before my release, I had to sign a declaration that my family and I would leave Germany within the next six months. The stern oral warning which accompanied the signing of the document was "Should you and your family still be in our country, then, all of you will be brought back here, with no return ever!"

Whilst my time was completely taken up with the task to "sell" house and printing plant, and our private house in a different street, my wife had the map of the world on the table and wrote identical letters to every imaginable government, with the inquiry and urgent request to let us immigrate into their country. Amongst others, there were letters to Guatemala, Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Panama, Mexico, to the South American countries and to Canada. Most of them did not bother to answer; Guatemala, according to our recollection, was courteous enough to send a regretful refusal.

In the meantime, the days became weeks, months, - the dead line came nearer and nearer.

It was in this state of despair, that we attempted unsuccessfully, to cross illegally the border of near Switzerland, for the time being only. in order to step up from there the search for a possible oversea's emigration, and to do so more freely and



unchecked. After our enforced return to L rrach, where we went underground, we were finally happy enough,- it was the first of many miracles,- to get the immigration permits, for the three of us, to the Republic of Santo Domingo. This came to pass through the never-ending efforts of our friends in Basel, Switzerland. We had been only three then, because our sixteen year old son, Max, had been sent to England, in the spring of 1939.

In order to reach our port of departure, <sup>GENEVA</sup> ~~Geneva~~, we needed transit visas for at least twenty-four hours each, for the passage through Switzerland and Italy. So I made the trip to the nearest Italian Consulate, Frankfort a. Main. For me, as a Jew, this was not without risks, but there was no other choice. The transit visas were granted by the Italian Consul, point of entrance, Brenner Pass. Upon my wish, the friendly consul agreed that these visas would be changed insofar as they would permit us to leave Germany via Basel-Chiasso, as soon as we would be in the possession of the Swiss transit visas. From Frankfurt, I proceeded to Mannheim, the seat of the Swiss Consulate. However, as soon as the Swiss employee had noticed the big, red "J" (Jew) in our passports, he abruptly and with all signs of utter indignation, told me that Switzerland would under no circumstances, issue to Jews, not even twenty-four hours transit visas! This, despite the immigration visas for Santo Domingo in the passports. All entreaties from my part to reconsider fell on deaf ears. On the other side, in order to avoid eventual last minute difficulties from the side of the Germans, which was much more likely to happen by leaving at the big place of exit, the Brenner Pass, it was a necessity for us to obtain neighboring Riehen-Basel visas, a small point of exit.

Late Friday evening, the 13th of October '39, I came back from Mannheim, and, after our family conference, our 15 year old daughter, Johanna, who had still her "Grenzpassierschein" as seamstress-apprentice, left very early the following morning for Basle, with exact instructions. A friend of ours in Basel, whom we had chosen as the most likely to get results, if anybody could, did not leave a stone unturned, and he accomplished the near impossible. Our girl came back with the necessary stamps in our passports. We managed to phone to Frankfurt, and the Italian Consul, in turn, promised to authorize by phone his colleague in Basel to give us the Italian transit visa for twenty-four hours. To our own disbelief and astonishment, at last everything worked out just fine, and the same late afternoon, Saturday, October 14th, the three of us, each carrying a suitcase and the allowed ten Mark in our pockets, made for the last time the corner around the "Hebeleck" restaurant in order to reach the train station. The emigration did not meet with any difficulties, even our suitcases were only searched superficially, no further questioning, no delay whatsoever. After a few stops, the "immigration" took place into Switzerland, we found ourselves in the Swiss part of the "Badische Bahnhof".

The night, we passed with friends. After all, close ties had always been established between Basel and my wife's family. To begin with, my father-in-law had been for three years an apprentice in the well known "Lithographische Kunstanstalt" (lithographic atelier) of Wolff & Co. in Basel. Much later, when my, in World War I in Russia perished brother-in-law, wanted to enlarge his and his father's lithography by establishing a printing branch, he, in turn, learned this part of his

trade again at Wolff's who had some years earlier, taken from lithography to printing , this was in 1912-1913. The older brother of my wife, who lost his life in Dachau, had studied for two semesters at the ancient University of Basel, commuting from Lörrach. My wife had attended the "Basel Höhere Töcherschule" (college for girls) from 1905 to 1908 and had been a secretary in a wholesale business in Basle until 1920, shortly before our marriage. Then, there was Johanna with her blessed "little border permit", learning the trade of a seamstress in Basel, and our son, Max, attending three times a week, the Basel Trade School.

After we had exchanged our "fortune" left to us, we called ourselves the legal owners of 10 dollars! Needless to say it was a riddle to us how to manage at the arrival in Santa Domingo. In our gloom, though, there was the optimistic outlook that the three of us would "rightaway" go to work!

When I came back to our nightquarter from a little walk, my wife excitedly told me that a schoolfriend of hers had handed her a farewell present of 200 Francs. She had by chance found out about our so sudden arrival from Lörrach, nobody else knew about it. I was touched to tears.

The following morning, the bus brought us and our suitcases to the so-called "Bundesbahnhof", the Swiss railway station in a quite different part of the city. The trip went from Basel via Chiasso to Milan and Geneva. But oh, oh, not so fast! The Italian railway officer at the Swiss-Italian border in Chiasso had figured out that if we continue with the same train to Geneva, we would spend more time on Italian soil than the granted twenty-four hours, stipulated in the passports. So we were ordered to

leave the train and to wait for the one passing the station at 5:30 in the morning. The time in between, we spent in the rather dirty waiting hall, on benches.

At our arrival in Genoa, we saw several porters, looking for guests. For good luck, we chose one of them and found ourselves in a small modest hotel whose owner spoke a little bit "tourist German".

In order to reach Santo Domingo, we had to have a transit visa for Venezuela. Since boats go from Venezuela to Santo Domingo, these transit visas are issued without any further ceremony by the Venezuela Consul of the port of departure, in our case Genoa. The porter of the hotel was kind enough to accompany us to the consulate. He was on the second floor of a big old house. In the hall, there was a small window which could be opened and closed from the inside. Upon our knocking, the window went up and a head appeared in the small opening. We presented our passports, the page with the Santo Domingo visas open and asked for the Venezuela transit visas. He turned the pages in one of them. We had expected he would take the passports inside in order to put his stamps on the proper place; instead he threw them back to us, rudely hollering "impossibile, race", slammed the little window down with a bang which went like a knife through us. I don't remember how we came down the stairs and how we reached the hotel. We ordered a soup, but we could not eat, the tears fell down into the full plates, tears of utter despair. Here was the ship lying in port which would bring us to safety, and what was left for us, being returned to the Brenner Pass?

In this moment of the most urgent need, when ruin and death seemed to have won out, Fate knocked at our door, a kind

fate, in the disguise of a well-dressed man in his fifties, who had heard Hanneli and my wife speaking Swiss-German in a low voice; he had been sitting not far from us, enjoying a glass of wine. He introduced himself as a Swiss who was returning from Switzerland to Columbia, where he owned a hotel since many years. He asked us why in the world we all looked like chicken being put to the knife the next moment and alas, the man had something there! We told him about our predicament and the eventual consequences. He became agitated and said in an angry voice: So there, we shall see whether there should not be a safe little place on this earth for people like you!

After some reflecting and thinking, he suggested to try Panama and he offered to accompany me to this Consulate, acting as interpreter. In a hurry, he gave his half empty small bottle of wine to the waiter for safekeeping, put his hat on, and out we were, he and I. He had also informed us that the fare would stay the same whether the transfer would take place in a Venezuela port or in Panama.

After having reached the Consulate, and had rang the bell, we were at once ushered in. The secretary listened closely to what our Swiss man said in Spanish, in rapid succession. Then he took one sheet from a pile of letters, apparently the morning mail, and showed it to my friend. I saw how he paled, we must be lost! It was a letter from the Government in Panama City which had- just to our misery- arrived this very morning, and which forbade in the strongest terms and going into effect at once, any further issuing of visas to Jews! After I heard this message, I stood there motionless, like felled by a flash of lightening.

Of course, and to our despair, we could never hide the fact that we were Jews; the big "J" in our passports spoke for itself, and was meant that way. Intimidated and unhappy, I suggested in a low voice, whether we could perhaps talk to the Consul himself, whereupon our good helper recovered and found his courage and optimism again. He slapped my back and said "Yes, this is a good idea- we will do that." There were a few words in Spanish to the secretary, who nodded and pushed a button. A boy appeared again a short efusion in Spanish, the boy disappeared, and a few minutes later, a gentleman entered, a big shawl around his throat, coughing and puffing, apparently the Consul- with a violent cold. He had his private quarters in the same house, across the hall. Our Swiss-Bolivian hotelier talked and talked like a persistant lawyer trying to save his client from the gallows. As he had finished, the secretary handed his boss the disastrous decree from their homeland. The Consul stared for quite a time at the letter, or- did he read it? At any rate, he put the sheet carefully back on top of the rest of the mail and said: " I have no time now to read the morning mail. I shall do that later. The visas for these people are granted, please make them ready." Blessed ~~by~~ the memory of this man! As the secretary wanted to go ahead with this order, another question and answer game arose between the two. Our saver hastily informed me that the secretary is going to make the visas valid for three days, but that he, our friend, would not agree with such a short time. He said he is not certain at all, that a boat would leave for Santa Domingo just within these three days, and then, so his train of thoughts went "you certainly would like to see some more of the

country, since you travel and will have traveled from so far". As if we had in the least any desire for sightseeing and with our state of finances!

My horror was beyond description as I had to witness how the secretary again pushed the button, how the boy appeared again between the door and disappeared again after a few rapidly spoken words by the secretary. As I had surmised, my companion had been bold enough to ask the decision of the Consul also in this point. My friend had an entire month suggested, while I had been thankfully ready to take the three days. Patiently, armed by his big comforter, the poor Consul reappeared. I did not know where to look, so embarrassed I was. There was a quick back and forth of words between our party and the secretary and the Consul and as the latter, with a short but not unfriendly greeting, disappeared again, the unflinching secretary informed by "lawyer" that 30 days for Panama it was! He had won the battle and we were the winners. Little did we anticipate then how all important this victory would be in due time for us!

Early the next morning, we left Genoa with the Italian steamship "Conte Grande". Just before boarding the boat, we gave the last letter from Europe to our son in England to a starved looking, poorly dressed man, a refugee also, asking him to buy a stamp and to mail the letter. We gave him all the Italian change we had. The man had kept his promise, the letter, as we found out later, had reached our son. It was everything else but an enjoyable trip on board of the "Conte Grande", but never mind; we were saved and soon on the high sea. The boat "housed" three times the

capacity of human beings. There was scarcely space to move or even to stay or to sit, everywhere in the narrow dark halls there were mountains of baggage, just piled on top of each other, haphazardly. I was separated from my wife and daughter nights, and I would never have found them. My "cabin" was crowded with men, the female's sleeping place was full of women, children and crying babies. The meals were given in three sections and hungry as we had been, the food was such that we could not enjoy it. It was not that it was not plentiful, but everything was poorly cooked, served in an unappetizing, unhygienic way; in fact, the portions were hurled on our not too clean plates and put before us with a bang, so that every so often the contents spilled over onto the long emergency tables, set up of boards without any cover. The numerous big fish in the ocean had doubtless a good time, plenty of "leftovers" came their way. The crew mostly addressed us as "baggage". But, as said before, all this did not bother us too much, after all, were we not on our way to a new life, without Nazis, without ever increasing horror and terror. If only we came away without a fire breaking out, this was our prayer day and night, in such a case, all of us would have perished, we knew that. A little place on the floor between desks, was a coveted thing and we exchanged such a precious possession amongst the three of us. The air was sticky and unhealthy and we could have use for some more oxygen. We all learned Spanish; now and then, we looked at the flying fish, as the ship continued to cross the quiet ocean under a wonderful dark blue, cloudless sky. Only on the last day, in the Carribean, the waters became more and more agitated, the waves went high, and our courage went down accordingly. However,



also this condition came to its end and on the 1st of December, 1939 the Conte Grande arrived in the Atlantic part of Cristobol Colon.

The Captain of the Port, who also was Chief of the Alien's Supervision, clad from head to toe in immaculate white, proceeded with the processing of those passengers who wanted to go on land. An Italian ship officer served as interpreter for German and Spanish. Everything seemed to go ahead quite fine, when, all of a sudden, we were asked to state our financial standing. I took out my billfold and counted exactly 32 dollars and 50 cents. With astonishment, the good Captain scrutinized this shocking small amount of money and asked us through the interpreter whether we really believed for one moment that three persons could live on this trifle for thirty days. In excitement and indignation, I retorted: 'But now, has the world not heard anything of the fact that in Germany we Jews were robbed of everything we had called our own, and that, when they were sure of this, they let us go out into the world? From where and by what miracle should we have come to money? Don't you see, we had to leave behind everything through no guilt of our own, we may be happy to have saved our naked lives". Hereupon, the Chief and Captain of the Port talked to the Italian officer who in turn gave us verbally this message: "The German Reich cannot expect that these German citizens ( but we were not any more German citizens, this had been taken away from us, we had become stateless) who have been robbed by the Reich, should become the burden of the Republic of Panama. You will be brought back to Germany with your family". This bombshell stunned us completely. Finally, I told him, and my wife and our daughter joined me, their tears flowing down in streams, that we would never return to Germany, where horror and certain death would await us. I have been once in the Concentration Camp in Dachau and no power <sup>the</sup> in/whole

wide world would bring me back there- rather would we jump over-board right here. That's what we told them, no, we shouted it in indescribable human despair. I took my \$32.50 back again and added, a little <sup>more composed</sup> ~~composed~~: " We are in good health, we have learned something, we are experienced, we are modest and unassuming, and we would be sure able to make an honest living. For the sake of Heaven and everything that is dear to you, please, not back to Germany! The interlude of silence which now enwrapped us, seemed endless. Our lives hung in the balance and was decided upon in these very moments.

As in Genoa, also here in the port of Cristobel-Colon, it was not the cold letter of the law which was victorious, but the quality and ripeness of a man who had finally grasped the strange implications of human fate in a devilish epoch. The thirty days' time of grace was granted to us, so we could leave the ship, we were free!

PANAMA



OUR PANAMA TIME- December 1, 1939 to April 26, 1940

On the first of December, 1939, after exciting and almost unsuccessful landing-procedures, we left the Italian boat "Conte Grande" which had brought us in three weeks from Genoa to this equatorial country. It was after 11 o'clock in the night when we found ourselves standing in the basement of the Port of Cristobal-Colon, with our suitcases. The tropical rains came down in torrents. A rather wretched cab approached us and we asked the driver to bring us to the least expensive hotel in the old city. He filled this order all right, the "hotel" where we found a room was in the limits of our means and alas, according to the price. We tried to ignore small, brown lively creatures which, without to ask us, shared our beds and did not contribute at all to a peaceful rest. We also did not bother about quite a few more conspicuous things going on around us. However, what did all this mean in comparison with what we had won? Nothing less than our freedom from fear, the knowing, incomprehensible as it seemed to us the first few days, there would not be any knocks at the door in the middle of the night. We would not any more lay paralyzed in our beds, when in the street below an automobile door would be slammed and steps would be heard.

As we soon found out, these tropical downpours occurred every day. They came, with all their vigor, at a sudden,- after one half hour or so, they stopped just as abruptly. One of the first things we were anxious to attend to, was the securement of our passage to Santo Domingo, the preliminary end destination of our journey. With our precious passports and the visas for Santo Domingo in them, we went to Cristobal, the modern part of the city, most dominated by American businesses, banks, steamship agencies, all closely connected with the Canal. In this part, mostly English

was spoken, whereas in Colon Spanish was predominant. Soon we found all those modern buildings, with lines of large trees giving some shade. What a cruel disappointment awaited us there! Trustingly, we started with the Grace Line. After the employee had leafed through our passports and we had specifically pointed out to him the all-important visas for Santo Domingo, he handed them back "for weeks and weeks, solidly booked"! He advised us to try this line and that line; the same procedure, the same results. When, after a third time, the exact "encore" was played, it dawned on us that they did not want us as passengers. The "J" despite the clear Santo Domingo visas! I remember that one was a French Line and we were dazed at the fact that these people went in this way along with Hitler's game, in a time they were at war with him and his principles. How naive and of childish mentality we were - then, thoroughly disillusioned, we returned to the old City, to the native Panamanians. On our way, we took our ration of bananas at our black "grocer". His "supermarket" was a small part of the decayed sidewalk and his exclusive "wares" consisted of big bunches of bananas spread out on the concrete. We had quickly found out that bananas was the thing for us, a Godsend. For 10 cents, we bought every evening our next day's supply for the three of us. For weeks, it was bananas for breakfast, bananas as lunch, and some more bananas was our dinner. To this day, we like this memorable fruit- we are a thankful Trio.†

Now what? One thing was clear to us. We had to do something - but what? A month is a short time- the Panama visa would elapse. We had no money, we had to find work, though officially, to earn money was forbidden to refugees on a transitory permit, also the terrible heat made it almost impossible to do odd jobs in households or so. We heard about a refugee-advising-com-

mittee to which a corner in the lobby of a bank had been allotted. The man in charge, a former lawyer from Vienna, greeted us in German. We told him our story as shortly as possible. He seemed to be in the picture about the steamship-companies. I remember so well, when he said "And if you would not go to Santo Domingo? What do you think awaits you there? You have to do the meanest work, You will be exploited, the living conditions for you will be terrible, the heat is almost the same as here, it is a Dictatorship and you will not be sure, from one day to the other one, what may happen.,"

He added "don't you have any other ideas?" With a sad smile, we retorted: "that is <sup>why</sup> we came to you!" Then he said" it is too bad that apparently you have no prospects or possibility whatsoever to enter the States," upon which remark, we briefed him as follows:

Quite some time before Dachau, that is before the 8th of November, 1938, we had started an energetic search for an U.S.A. citizen, able and willing to give us an affidavit. Never in my life had I heard this strange sounding word before and now it had become a household expression in almost every Jewish family in Germany. It is the written guarantee, addressed to the U.S.A. government, that the "affidavit-giver" takes up full financial responsibility concerning the immigrant to be and this for fully five years. He has to include separately a notary statement of his estate, in order to prove without any doubt, his capability to "sponsor" his protegee. Unfortunately, contrary to many of our fellow sufferers, we had no relatives in America. But finally, my incessant and insistant letter writing brought some hope to us that there might arise a Silver Lining on our dark horizon.

Friends of ours who had already emigrated in 1937, worked hard on their relatives to take pity on us. In the meantime, the epic making 8th of November had come and whilst my husband was in the concentration camp in Dachau, two big insured envelopes were handed to me by the mail, with American stamps. Could it be? Yes, it could. In the U.S., the word had gotten around that those inmates would be released who could prove they were able to emigrate at once. To this version, we owed the fact that of a sudden, we had not only one, but two very effective affidavits from two complete different sides, in our possession. Little did those brave philanthropists know how long it would take to materialize the immigration on the grounds of their affidavits. In paranthesis, to describe the circumstances by which we got these affidavits would be a story for itself again.

In the meantime, towards the middle of January 1939, my husband had reluctantly been released from Dachau, by virtue of a different reason. Our printing plant and building and our private house was not yet "transferred" into Arian hands- and my husband's task, after his return, was to find immediately Arian buyers. Of course, we did not see a penny of this transaction, we had only to handle them. The money had to go from the buyer to a "trustee-account" in a designated bank, that is, it was at once confiscated. We were allowed to receive every month a certain amount for our livelihood. Under these circumstances, one could think it had been of little interest to us how little or how great a sum the forced sale of our earlier possessions would yield. Nothing of the kind, we had all the reasons to be very much interested, since to be allowed to go out of the country, there was the immense "Reichsfluchtsteuer" looming ominously on the horizon,

besides all the other tributes imposed on us, in order to get the "~~U.S.~~ Verdecklichkeits-Schein" that is, the all important Nazi authorized statement that they had taken back everything what the man had stolen with the time from the German People, and so there is no further questioning about his being ripe to go!

After this excursion into the fields of Nazi refinements in stripping us of our in hard honest work acquired possessions, we go back to our American affidavits. They consisted of originals and copies and one had to present them at the American Consulate in Stuttgart for further processing. There was a long, long waiting in an unhappy crowd extending into the street. When finally when your time has come, the originals of the affidavits were filed away, we were handed back the copies, and furthermore, we received something precious, a number, according to which we would be called up for further steps for the immigration. I was happy to see that things were finally moving. This happiness, however, was soon cut short, when we found out, at at least three years would elapse before our number would come up! There was a certain yearly quota set aside by U.S.A. laws, for immigrates from Germany, and not one more was admitted, so all the smaller number than ours would be given precedence. With dismay and despair, we had to recognize that the great hope "America" had to be abandoned and buried. With more zeal than ever, I started again with my petitions to the Governments of the World overseas. Of course, this "American Plight" we had not in such details to explain to the former Viennese lawyer, this man was fully in the picture.

After he had heard the gist of our information, he became quite excited and agitated. ~~My~~ <sup>my</sup> ~~US~~ <sup>good</sup> friends, he said, visibly shaken, "do you have the copies of these precious affidavits with you?" And to us breathless listeners, he explained the



the almost unbelievable fact that here in Panama the numbers given to us by the American Consulate in Germany had no bearing whatsoever. The American Consul in Panama gets a certain amount of numbers directly from the American Immigration Office, and since here there is not such an unhappy army of applicants as in Germany right now in this state of emergency, the consequence is that the American Consul here is able to process you in a much shorter time. In a hope inspiring mood, he said "go home now and look for your copies and make an appointment with the American Consulate in Cristobal. He gave us the exact address and in a daze we left the good man.

But now, did we or did we not bring with us those affidavit copies, we had supposed to have become meaningless pieces of paper? We went home, searched feverishly our suitcases and yes--indeed, we found them in the lining of the cover of one of them!

I remember clearly the rains coming down in buckets when the three of us plus the affidavit copies and the Stuttgart numbers, were on our way to the American Consulate. What eminence these documents had attained again of a sudden! Soon we found the building in the residential section, surrounded by a wonderful park with shade-spreading trees and well-tended green lawns. Also many bushes heavy with tropical blossoms in a riot of colors. What a difference, this quick and dignified mansion, compared to the Stuttgart Consulate with the milling around of a multitude of desperate hunted human beings, in antichambers, in halls, in the street, anxiously clutching their precious papers, waiting to be interviewed by not too enthusiastic employees who were not at all thrilled by this sudden swinging into high gear of their "business".

A young man, fluently speaking English and Spanish, asked us politely "what he could do for us". We showed him our

papers and made the necessary comments. He said "A moment, please" and disappeared with the papers. After a while, we scarcely dared to breathe, he came back with a long questionnaire he asked us to fill in. The secretary politely handed me an inkpot and in my utter excitement and nervousness, it slipped out of my hands and landed with a terrible clatter on the ingeniously patterned mosaic floor, the ink running around in several miniature rivers. How my face was red, I must have been a picture of utter embarrassment and terror. "I wish I would dissolve into thin air" that was about what I thought. The young Panamanian, with perfect poise and with a sympathetic little smile said "It's all right and put a second inkpot before me. When, about five months later, we returned for our visas, faint traces of my awful misdemeanor were still to be seen!

After we had answered all the questions, we were ushered into the office of the Cónsul. He turned out to be a real blessing for us, a fine man with a heart. He informed us that the first thing he had to do now, would be to claim the originals of the affidavit-copies at the American Consulate in Stuttgart. He retained these copies, of course, and timidly, like in a dream which could evaporate the next moment, we also wanted to hand him the numbers. He smiled and we heard it now "from the horse's mouth" that these numbers would have no significance at all, here. If Stuttgart sends me the originals of the quite formidable affidavits in reasonable time, I hope to get you on your way to the States within the next 4½-5 months" he added. What a turn our fortunes had taken.

However, though, for not to go overboard with our happiness, there arose ominously the question: Where do we stay

these 4½ to 5 months with our 30 day permission in Panama of which 16 days had already elapsed? But also for this dark riddle, our versatile Consul had a ready answer. In English, he dictated a letter to the Secretary, addressed to the Captain of the Port in Colon with the contents that we had appeared this morning before him in matters of immigration to the States, that our prospects were so good that he thinks we would be ready within the next 4-5 months. He asked the Captain, please to extend our transitary visas for the necessary time. He emphasized that he vouches for our emigration. This letter was typed by the Secretary in Spanish, the Consul signed it and with a benevolent smile, we were advised to present these "credentials" at once to the "Portcaptain" and with a "Good Luck" we were shown to the door by the young Panamanian.

"Good Luck" indeed! On Cloud 9, we went to the Port and asked for the Captain. In his office, we handed him silently our letter. In those times, 1940, the Panamanian authorities looked at the U.S.A. as their Big Brother, they admired the States and appreciated the economic boom the Panama Canal had brought to the region. So, such a wish from the part of the U.S. Consul was readily fulfilled. He instructed us to come every first of the month, until we would get our visas for the States. We warmly thanked him for his much appreciated co-operation and left.

Again, are we dreaming? We looked at each other in disbelief and in delight. No, all this was not a Fata Morgana, but happy reality; in a few months, we shall enter the States, where we could work and become useful and recognized members of the human society again, the Big Goal many had already reached and for many, too many, it was forever denied to reach. We did not forget to hurry to our "Refugee Committee" in the corner of the bank's lobby. The man from Vienna was almost as excited as we were about the

fantastic turn of our affairs.

Luckily, the Captain of the Port had not asked us, through his interpreter, about our means to stay so much longer in Colon. However, we asked ourselves this question, and we had a brainstorm, a big one, a successful one!

In order to relate this chapter of our life in Panama, we have first to go back to Germany- mentally- back to our hometown Lörrach, where I was born and where my ancestors back to Napoleon's time, were buried. Shortly after my husband's return from Dachau, rumors were flying amongst the Jews still in Lörrach that something could be done with Cuba. With the time, this condensation came out: You had to send a certain amount in dollars to some private persons, refugees also, who in turn would send workable visas. It all seemed pretty risky to us, because this scheme could only have its basis in bribery and illegality. On the other side, not to cling to even such a chance, would have been unpardonable. However, on one point my husband remained adamant. He flatly refused to send his one and only reserve funds to an unknown private man in Cuba. He insisted "the money has to go to an established bank in Havana, as trustee. The negotiations were successful in this respect. They were conducted from day to day, our instructions in her head, by our "little girl" Hanneli, 15 years old, who was a great asset in our frantic efforts to get out, because she alone was still allowed to commute to near Basel every day, on the strength of her "kleine Grenzpassir-Schein" in order to finish her apprenticeship as a seamstress.

Now, how did we happen to have the money to be sent to Cuba? The commuters from Lörrach to Basel in the so-called "kleine Grenzpassir-Schein" were allowed to have a maximum of 10 Mark with them, for personal expenses. So, Hanneli took all the time, every day, her 10 Mark with her and left them in Basel with trusted friends. These friends, a whole "club" had Hanneli alternately for dinner, in order that these every day 10 Mark remained intact and could fully go to the "emergency fund". Besides this, our son Max, 16, who had been an apprentice in our

own printing plant up to November 8, 1938, went three times a week to the Gewerbeschule in Basel, since he was not allowed to attend such a school in L rrach. These legal transfers added up with the time. We would never allow ourselves to take advantage of our children's rare luck, still to pass the border, by trying highly risky foolish things to accelerate this "money business".

So, the emergency at hand, Hanne<sup>8</sup>li was ordered to "gather in" the deposits. I wouldn't know to the present day whether there was as much as we needed, I have the strong suspicion that here and there it had been rounded up until the stipulated sum was ~~stipulated sum~~ reached and could be transferred to Cuba.

In the meantime, this illegal emigration project to Cuba had flowered into a wholesale business, to the point that, shortly after our transfer, the whole bubble was blowing up and ended in the horrible tragedy of the boat "St. Louis" with about 900 Jewish refugees on board, to whom landing was not permitted. They cruised the seas for weeks, hungry, desperate, sending incessantly S.O.S. calls out for angels. It was in the first days of July 1939, when, sitting at the dinner, I heard the story at the radio. In malicious times, with relish, the St. Louis story was told and for sheer horror, my fork fell from my hands to the plate which broke, clattering into pieces.

Now, after this interlude, back to equatorial Panama. The brainstorm, was of course, we must retrieve this money and bring it from Havana to Panama. Just the thought of such a thing to happen brought us to the brink of delirium. After all, though we kept our food-expenses still at 10 cents per day for the three of us, though our daughter brought in a few dollars by sewing

here and there, and I, by cleaning and doing housework (officially, refugees on a temporary visa, were not allowed to work) the little what we had to pay for our room still weighed heavily on us, and we were near a loss how to go farther along. To look for financial help at the Committee was for us out of the question. After all, we had our pride and it would have meant a hurting humiliation.

After a session with our thinking caps on, we took the first steps in materializing our newest project. We went to Cristobal, chose one of the most imposing bank buildings and boldly asked for an interview with one of the "higher ups" To the interested listening gentleman, we again told our story and in some detail, the saga of our in Cuba "buried treasure". We had no tangible proof to underscore our tale. Nevertheless, it must have made its imprint on the banker, an American bank, of course. He promised us to make inquiries at the bank in Havana designated by us, he even offered to send a cable whose expenses we could repay after our money would come in. What kind helpful people we had the good luck to meet down there "in the tropical jungle"! He gave us his card and he told us to pass by again in about five days. Though five days was a relative long time of uncertainty, we were overjoyed about our success, so far. Punctually, after the 5 days, we found ourselves again vis à vis the mighty banker. His broad smile took all fearfulness to apprehension off our souls. The money was here and we should make our dispositions. He showed us the transmission slip, our eyes watered and were dimmed, but there it was- we called 1200 dollars our own. After we had made the necessary arrangements, we went out into the tropical sun, dazzled by the unthinkable, unbelievable fairy tale luck. Back we went to our Vienna man and

asked him where we should turn for decent living quarters. Though we had been at once positive that this pot-luck money can under no circumstances be squandered, we also knew, it was a necessity to move from our present quarters into a modest prices apartment. Rent for Europeans, in apartments with stone floors and sanitary facilities was one of the most expensive items here, in Cristobal-Colon, and we had also to think of our fare to the U.S. The man in the cubicle had the address of a family on permanent visa here which found it hard to pay the full rent for their three rooms and kitchen apartment and looked for another family to share their residence with. Though we had our doubts about such an arrangement, we went there. It was a modern house with stone floors, shower and running water, the kitchen was even equipped with a small icebox. Accordingly, the rent was very high, even divided in 2, it was more than we had figured to spend. The renters were a couple, no children and we agreed to sub-rent from them a room as living and sleeping room for my husband and for me and there was a small closet with a window, big enough for a bed for our daughter, the kitchen we had in joint use. The use of their furniture was included in the price and we could never expect to live in such "luxury" on our own, as to an apartment.

Now the fun of having to take care of a household, to go shopping and to cook for my dear ones began. The hardships to live under the equator sun was no trifle, especially for me it was torture from morning to evening, when I had every day to go shopping because the tiny icebox for the 2 households did not hold much and what was cooked in one day, had to be eaten the same day. At 7 o'clock in the morning, everybody went shopping in the big

covered "Markethall". Meat, vegetables, all kinds of wonderful fruits, were rather inexpensive. It was the groceries, mostly imported from the U.S. which swelled the expenses. We did not buy any cloth, of course, with the exception that Hanne<sup>bi</sup> made a light dress for me and 1 for her, from inexpensive material, which we washed every evening. Around 8, I was back from the Market with my purchases, dripping and wet through and through. Showers brought only relief for the first 5 minutes. Early in the morning, we dumped our bedlinen into a bucket with cold water, to hang them like curtains along the windows, in order to cool the room. In less than an hour, the procedure had to be repeated. However, heat or no heat, we did not for one moment longingly recall the Egyptian fleshpots, in our case, the wonderful cool fresh air which used to come down to us from the mountains of the Schwarzwald. That was all, and so much more, finished and done with, we had the feeling to live on a different planet, it was a completely different, a second life. Hanne<sup>bi</sup> had now a "steady" job, as a seamstress in a small atelier. We kept ourselves busy with improving our English. My husband, who had started to learn Spanish when still in Lörrach and continued on the boat, was able now to read the Spanish part of the daily paper in Cristobal. Since the day of our visit with the Am<sup>ican</sup> Consul, he had switched to English. Another daily routine was to go to the Postoffice in Cristobal. In Panama, there was no delivery by mailmen. You had to go to look for your mail and we were always anxious to get news from our son in England. As the time went on and three months had passed, we began to become a kind of restless for some other news in writing, a summons to the American Consulate! Time after time we told ourselves that only



3 months had elapsed since the "epochmaking" visit. Our stay in Panama did not cause us any further difficulty thanks to the magic letter of the Am<sup>erican</sup> Consul. By now we had become so used to the all-pitchblack population, we took it completely for granted. In the whole, it seemed to us they were mostly nice, patient, naive people, who worked hard for a modest living, though in a pace according to the damp-hot climate. Our best time came in the evening, after 7 o'clock, when darkness fell down at a sudden, without the benefit of twilight. Then, dressed to a minimum, we walked to the beach, where a lifespending blessed cool breeze awaited us from the Atlantic, we sat down into the sand and listened to the never-ending heartbeats of the ocean.

Finally, "one fine day", as Madame Butterfly sings in her famous aria, it happened: a short memo "to be kind enough to pass by one of these days"! For sheer excitement, we could not sleep that night. Early in the forenoon, and no rain this time, we crossed again the Park, our steps somewhat more selfreliant, than on our first visit here. We were ushered in, my husband looked meaningfully at the faint traces from my accident with the ink-pot, and we exchanged glances. Briskly the well-remembered figure of the Consul appeared and motioned us into his sanctum. How nice and cool was it here thanks to the air-conditioning system throughout. We were handed our visas for the immigration and permanent stay in the U.S., they were written and stamped into our passports before our own eyes. As port of entrance, we had chosen San Francisco. Besides L.A., this was the nearest port and in consequence, the fare within the smallest limits, furthermore, so we had been informed, Northern California has the most adequate climate for people coming from our part of Europe and besides these 2 moti-

vations, S.F. had a strange attractive power and promise for us.

On this occasion, we also heard from the good Consul that with his help, we would be able to claim our son in England to join us in the States. He gave us explicit instructions on this point. Without our knowing then, Fate, in the disguise of the English Ministry of War, had decided quite differently with our boy. But this would be a story of its own.

We started to wind up our affairs in Cristobal-Colon, booked for transportation to S.F., put our meager belongings back into our so European looking suitcases, being in a hilarious mood all this time. We had also to go through some medical examination and we had to pay a "Kopfsteuer" of six dollars each; how gladly did we part from this 18 dollars.

Finally, on the 6th of April, 1939, the great day of saying farewell to hot, but hospitable Colon had dawned. Our boat to S.F., the "City of Baltimore" took off from Balboa, on the opposite end of the Canal, at the Pacific side. We took the train through the jungle which brought us to Panama City, where we found it still hotter than in Colon. An hour before our ship was scheduled to appear at the dock in Balboa, we were there with our suitcases and with one more big invisible suitcase containing our strong feelings of thankfulness, happiness and of expectation.

The boat had only first class and tourist class and our nest-egg was in a dangerously low point after we had paid our tickets. We could have saved a small amount by travelling on a freighter, but there was none going to S.F. in that time, and then, people in the know, frowned upon this idea. They told us, as soon as we would arrive in the States, we should take out our first papers (intention to become a U.S.A. citizen) There, amongst

other points, we have to state with what means of transportation we had reached the country. To have to mention a freighter would not make the proper impression. To have travelled tourist class on a boat like the City of Baltimore would be much more in our own interest. By the way, we "Greenhorns" got so many advices and informations about Life in the U.S.A. that our heads sometimes ached, though we took everything in with an eager mind and a willing heart!

The trip from Balboa along Mexican Lower California turned out to be a wonderful experience for us, one week of relaxation and pleasure par excellence. We had a clean, spacious "Stateroom", snow white slightly starched linen on the beds, a full set of towels for each of us renewed daily, courteous stewards and waiters, a multitude of long deck chairs with gaily colored cushions and blankets, excellent food in a dazzling variety, served in the style of a first class Swiss hotel. This was now the life on a ship, I had read so much about way back in my teens. But as everything comes to an end, Schlaraffenleben: on the 8th day we steamed under the famous Golden Gate Bridge to our definite destination; hilly, excitingly and bright looking San Francisco. The ship had been 2 hours late to arrive, but the immigration procedure did not take too long and soon we found ourselves on "American soil" in San Francisco, as unbelievable and as fantastic as it seemed to the 3 of us.

SWISS INTERLUDE

by

Henry E. Seling  
and  
Flora V. Seling

SWISS INTERLUDE

In the Chapter, "I definitely leave from Europe" I refer to "an unsuccessful attempt to flee <sup>via</sup> Switzerland" and I would like to insert here a more specified account about this venture.

Since the Dachau release, late in December 1938, we were in July now, everybody felt the "outbreak" of the long advertised War would be imminent, and still absolutely nothing had come out, so far, of our incessant and frantic efforts to find an asylum somewhere in the world. In our despair, we decided to try the illegal way to enter Switzerland, 20 minutes from our own L<sup>ö</sup>rrach. We knew for sure, that from there, we could emphasize our search for a place overseas on quite a different and more promising scale.

So, on one of the last days of August '39, we left the two rooms in our former house, which were already stripped of furniture and everything, and which were to be taken over anyway the 1st of Sept. by the new owner. During the last weeks, it had been a life with boxes, bare floors and walls, the 2 emergency beds we had to have up to the last moment, were picked up by arrangement. Almost nobody had dared to buy our remaining furniture, we had to beg that they were taken away under cover of the night, it had become too risky to be seen with Jewish people.

It was on the 29th of August <sup>1939</sup> when, quite unexpected, we said hello to astonished friends in Basel. Of course, we felt very uneasy on Swiss soil without proper papers and all that. We stayed overnight at different friends' houses. It was all not so easy as we had anticipated, and we entered into negotiations to switch over to France where, in Mulhouse, I had a married sister. Fortunately,

this did not work out, despite the efforts of my relatives. I say "fortunately" because 90% of those who were able to escape to France, later lost their lives, mostly in Auschwitz (and so also our brother-in-law, a native Alsatian) Amongst those doomed ones there were many lifelong friends of ours, with whom I had gone to school and with whom I had grown up.

However, also in Basel, the soil became hotter and hotter under our feet. On the 3rd day of our stay, war was declared and in quick succession, Poland was fiercely attacked. Official announcements appeared in the Basel newspapers that every alien, living illegally in the city, has to present himself at 9 o'clock in the morning at the "Lohnhof", the police headquarters for "settlement of their status". Though some daring friends suggested to hide us until "the storm had passed", we decided to follow the summons for good or for worse, the more so, since the Swiss citizenry was warned about the harboring of such aliens, under penalty.

~~When~~ our friends saw, we are ~~not~~ to go ahead, and to do what had to be done, they all set up an optimistic front, pointing out to us, that now, under war-conditions, we would be classified as "political refugees" and we would be given official asylum up to the moment we had found a definite emigration country overseas. Despite such expressed optimism, we waited, shaking all over, in the 2 by 2 row, along with about 25 fellow sufferers. They had come from Lörrach, Stetten, Grenzach, Kirschen and other small places, all of them not farther from Basel than about 5-8 miles. We were "affectionately" guarded by Swiss policemen. It turned out that the "settlement of our status" was understood by the Federal Authorities in Switzerland in the sense, that all these men and women were sent back to Germany by police surveillance

I am not quite sure about this- with the "Black Maria", the big police-wagon with which drunkards and such usually were rounded up and which had been polished to a high sheen before our own eyes when all of us had been waiting for our "interviews" in the wide court of the Lohnhof. This happened after war had been declared 2 days before. All were sent back- into their deaths via Gurs, Lublin, Auschwitz, Theresienstadt- with the exception of the 3 of us.

We were transferred to the guards room of the Swiss police station in the Badische Bahnhof, in a quite different part of the city of Basle, in order to await there the decision of the Bundes police in Bern. As we were told, steps were in progress on behalf of us right now, in Bern, from several different sides, to induce the Swiss authorities to reconsider our case. As we later learned, all these friends of ours fought gallantly an unequal fight, doomed to failure from the beginning.

On our way out of the Lohnhof, we had seen the 11 year old only son of good friends of ours from Lörrach, sitting at the curb. He was legally in Basle for a few days, to wait for a "Kindertransport" for England to be put together. His parents had also tried their luck with Basle and were amongst the ones sent back. How uncontrolled and bitterly this boy cried and cried, I still hear it in my memory and in my soul. He never saw his parents again, they perished.

It was a long, anxious time for us, there in the guards' room. We sat there, enwrapped in gloomy thoughts, for hours and hours, from morning 10 o'clock until late into the afternoon. Once, a higher officer entered the room, looked around and said in the Swiss dialect "Si müent alli <sup>nuse</sup> unse", "they have all to go! I knew for whom this was meant, though my good husband tried to

give these words a different meaning, not concerning us. Every-time, when the phone rang, we "criminals" became frightened, expecting the verdict. Accompanied by a policeman, I was allowed to buy a small cake of chocolate and a roll at the snackstand in the hall. It was for our daughter who complained of being hungry. Even to the privy, we were thoughtfully accompanied, and we had to have the door a little bit open.

Finally, towards 5 o'clock, there was the telephone again. I saw at once from the expression in the face of the very human officer, that this time, we must be the topic. I was scarcely through with this rapid instinctive reaction, when the official put the receiver back and said to us in an everything else but a cheerful voice, I am sorry, but you have to go back there, the order just came from Bern and I cannot do anything about it. The last train to the Wiesetal (Lörrach) will be going out in 10 minutes, and I have to send a policeman along with you.

My composure left me, and looking into the eyes of my deadly pale husband, I implored the officer to kill the two of us with the service revolver on his side and for Heaven's sake, to smuggle our daughter through the Station building and to bring her to this and this address, so that she may live. Visibly shaken, the good man answered to this outburst, that he could not and would not do such a thing and that he begs us not to make this more difficult for him. He motioned a policeman and ordered him to keep a few steps behind us when bringing us to the German border, because, he said, these people are no criminals or such.

As I mentioned before, everyone of the wretched, frightened human beings who stood that morning by two and two in the court of the Lohnhof, perished. Only for us, by virtue of wonders and more wonders, it came about that we should emigrate legally and with our



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papers six weeks later, with 24 hours Swiss and 24 hours Italian transit visas, in order to go out into the world, into the Great Unknown!

OUR SON MAX

by

Henry E. Seling  
and  
Flora V. Seling

1.

OUR SON MAX

It was Thursday, November the 10th, 1938. The black cloud, hanging for so long over the frightened, helpless Jews in Germany, burst in the forenoon of this day, bringing destruction and death to the unhappy "Non-Arians".

The synagogues, temples through<sup>out</sup> the country went up in fire and smoke, the men, except a relatively few lucky ones who could by chance escape or were hidden by Arian friends and neighbors, were rounded up by Gestapo<sup>men</sup> from outside, in the homes, places of work or in the streets, on hand of thoroughly prepared lists. They were all herded into the local jails, from there, they were driven through the streets to the station. The streets were lined with the "justly aroused people", threatening and jeering. Trains brought them to the also thoroughly prepared numerous concentration camps. Not all of them, though, reached their destinations; many unfortunate ones were already on their way to the camps slain, shot, stabbed to death. The camps turned out to be horrible Dante Purgatories of slow or sudden death.

My husband was also taken away from our house, early in the forenoon of this Nov. the 10th, the day of utter despair. Max, our 16 year old son, was not at home when all this happened. He was an apprentice in our printing plant, but was not allowed to attend the tradeschool of our city, where theoretical instruction for the apprentices of all trades were given, as supplement to their practical training in the shops. We had been able to send our son to the corresponding school of near Basle, Switzerland, since we lived in the small German border city of Lörrach, Baden. He attend<sup>ed</sup> this school twice weekly, Monday and Thursday forenoons, and was supposed to come back home at noon, by street car.

This 10th of November happened to be a Thursday and I frantically hurried to Mr. Gottfried Graf, a Swiss Native and a lifelong friend of our family. I implored him to go from Lörrach to Riehen, the Swiss borderline, where passengers, mostly commuters, had to transfer from the Swiss street cars into the German handled ones, to try to intercept Max and to tell him to go back to Basle, by all means, not to come home, until further instructions. Our good <sup>friend</sup> succeeded in this mission, Max was for the time being saved, having gone back to Basle, to friends of ours there. He, Mr. Graf, was our precious "agent" between our boy and his very uneasy stay in Basle, and us. Finally, it was arranged that my sister, married in Mulhouse, France, would pick him up in Basel and bring him to their own residence to live with them, also for the time being.

In January, my husband was released from Dachau on the grounds to "sell" at once our business and our private house, (the car, standing before our house, had already been confiscated on the 10th of November) Besides this task, the difficult question loomed on the agenda! What to do with <sup>Max</sup> ~~Max~~? He could not stay permanently in France, without any papers, passport, etc; hidden at my sister's house. However, on the other hand was I wise to bring him back home, where "home" had become a precarious conception; something what we had taken for granted since we were born, had with every passing day become more questionable and disappearing into thin air before our almost unbelieving eyes. What was the wisdom, then, to bring that youth back into a deteriorating situation, where the very ground under our feet was inch by inch taken away? And yet, my husband insisted that the smaller of the two evils and risks would be to have him come back for a short time, so he could be equipped with proper papers, and sent then

away, legally.

Although, among all the new laws and regulations in behalf of us "Non'Arians", there was one which stipulated that, if such a non'arian had left the country, he could not come back, my husband had been given at the City Hall of Lörrach a kind of reassurance that, when our <sup>boy</sup> would leave for good as quickly as ever possible, they would close an eye.

Owing to the fact that 1938 was still a relatively young date as to the 100% penetration and mentality of Nazi tyranny ~~and~~ that the "civic" administration had in those days still retained a substantial part of its authority, everything went smoothly. There was a night of anxiety and excitement, ending in the passionate kisses and embraces between parents and son, and in the morning, there was Max again, in the midst of his family, just like that! The City Hall people, as they had promised, were cooperating in the procurement of the necessary papers for a legal visit.- But, where to send him, this was the question. My husband was reluctant to let him go back to France, because it would have to be an illegal entrance again, despite the affirmation of our brother-in-law that nothing bad would happen. These exchanges took always place through the invaluable services of our Swiss friend. He could move undisturbed from place to place over the borders, whilst our passports had been confiscated a long time ago. Was it a headache, besides all the other headaches and heartaches!

In this frightening predicament, one of those almost unbelievable coincidences enter which saved us time and again from certain destruction, in the course of our long Odyssey, which gave the overwhelming question "where to send our boy!" a dramatic and satisfactory answer. It is impossible to go into all the respective details and I shall limit myself in stating that a nice

~~niece~~  
 niece of ours, whose Father, my brother, was murdered in Dachau, in the time my husband was also there, was a dietary nurse in a private hospital in Berlin. Through a patient there, who had a sister in London, England, she had heard that a certain Church-Congregation in London had made up its mind to take into their care and custody 2 or 3 Jewish boys from Germany who were in jeopardy there. Our niece thought at once of Max, urged the patient to get more details from her sister and then informed us of the possibility adding name of the Church and address of the Secretary. At once the then new "letters with wings" the airmail letters, went back and forth (mine, in my best English) references, report cards, medical statements, had to be sent in and what do you know, in a relative short time, there was the green light for Max to emigrate quite legally to England!

During the time of "negotiations", our private house had been sold, the amount of money at once confiscated, our furniture, linen and household wares were also disposed of with the exception of one bed. I clearly remember I wrote my England letters on a fruit box in the empty room, without the benefit of an English dictionary.

And something else, another frightening circumstance. Shortly before this England possibility opened up, my husband had to undergo an eye-operation which spelled "to see or not to see". For this purpose, he was at the University of Freiburg eye hospital. Freiburg is 2 hours train ride from Lörrach, towards the South of Baden and I commuted back and forth. Well, the intricate and difficult operation proved to be successful. It was carried out by a Professor of good Nazi indoctrination, but whose professional ethics were at this time still strong enough to cause him to do his very best in order to save my husband's eyesight.

So, one fine day in March 1939, accompanied by his mother, Max appeared in the hospital in Freiburg, to say good-bye to his father, who then was on his way of recuperating. The Professor allowed him to go with us to the station, under the stern warning not to cry. It seemed, in the state of healing of the wound, tears could become devastating. We made it as short as ever possible at the station and everything went well. I say "we", because I had to go with Max to Frankfort on the Main, on account of the procurement of a Dutch transit visa for him. This did not meet with any difficulties, we had a farewell meal together, and on Max's special request, we enjoyed a glass of applewine, a specialty of Frft~~l~~, on top of the historically well known "Römer" where in the middle-ages, the emperors of the German Reich held with great pomp and circumstances, their "Gatherings". Only as we left the antique restaurant, we noticed a sign "Jews undesired", which had to be displayed on the walls of every public eating or drinking place.

Then we went to the station; the train stood there and mercifully pulled out immediately after Max was inside with his suitcase. We waved our handkerchief for a long time, then I impulsively went down on my knees on the hard and cold concrete, stammering: God, my God, at least he is safe"

And safely, Max arrived in London, was expected by a chauffeured ~~Rolls~~ Royce and brought to the Mansion of a certain Lady Baker, an influential official of the Church. A search for an apprenticeship in a printing plant was unsuccessful and as time went on, they found a job for him in ~~Cowes~~, on the Isle of ~~Wight~~, in a shipyard, until the war came, in August 1939, we could freely exchange messages with Max. I may add here that, after the liquidation in full of business and private house, we had been allocated

temporarily <sup>a</sup>small apartment, completely furnished. It had belonged to a Jewish couple, very good friends of ours, which had fled to France; both of them perished there! From September on, we were completely cut off from Max.

In the meantime, our own situation had become more and more precarious until, in the nick of time, also we, my husband and I and our 15 year old daughter, Johanna, could emigrate to the States via a 6 months stay in Panama. There, it was possible again to establish connections with our boy in England. We heard, how anxious he in turn had been to hear from us and how worried he was about our safety. By and ~~By~~ <sup>By</sup>, April 1940 came around and with this month, our visas for the definite immigration into the States. We had chosen San Francisco to settle in, and as soon as we got there, we sent a cable to Cowes, announcing our happy arrival. To our surprise, there was no reaction whatsoever. Anxiety and depression descended upon us again; then rumors became certainty that the English Government, in the wake of the Dunkirk disaster, had everywhere in England rounded up the thousands of Jewish refugees, in the fear that they could possibly be infiltrated by Nazi spies. They were all concentrated on the Isle of Man and sent from there head over heels to the various English Dominions as South Africa, Australia, Canada. But now, where was Max?

It did not help one little bit our cast down mood when we heard the exciting voices in the street, of paper boys trying to do extra good business by the catchwords: English ship with Jewish refugees torpedoed on their way to Australia! Finally, after about six weeks, we got the information so desperately longed for. It came from Miss Eileen Leach, the Secretary of "our" Church, whose indefatigable efforts and good connections with "high places"



were finally crowned with success. She had found out that Max was alive and somewhere in Canada, in a military detention camp; the place itself could not be revealed. What a happy excitement, what a relief it was, how we clutched in our hands this happiness-giving cable from England, which had arrived early in the morning! As time went on, we also got uncensored information direct from our boy, that he is in good health "somewhere" in Canada. The envelope had a stamp "Prisoner of War" which seemed strange to us, but never mind, everything else but that we saw his own handwriting again and that, in consequence, he is alive. For a longer time, the mutual relationship between parents and son was strictly regulated to seize of letter and to topic and there was a firm censorship. So, all we heard from each other in 3 or 4 weeks old messages was "I am fine and hope soon to hear the same from you", expressed in a variety of otherwise meaningless words. But, as we reminded us again and again that, after all, Max was alive and in good health what more could we expect or hope for in these times of war and senseless destruction?

What we learned later was, that the Canadian Government had not been advised at all of this new shipload of mostly younger people and had put them into camps for German prisoners of War. As soon as these inmates recognized the nature of the new arrivals, they went with knives towards them, threatening to kill! These melees were quickly broken up, the Jewish refugees taken into separate different camps, with improvements as to occupations there and studying possibilities, also different opportunities in the field of recreation. Even Kosher food was provided. After everything had somehow settled down, and a kind of routine been established, Max signed up for a corresponding course given by the McGill Uni-

versity in Montreal; which kept him soundly busy in this rather dreary camp-life.

As time went on, things became sort of easier, though our exchange of letters still had only limited topics and when they arrived at either end, had always reached a respectable vintage. Finally, a delicate silver lining appeared on the horizon, a faint possibility arose that our boy could be released from camp, to re-enter the outside world in Canada. The pre-condition was, we had to have a Canadian citizen in good standing who would vouch for Max that he would take him in as a member of the family and provide for his livelihood, because the youth would not to be allowed to work, only to study. Now, where in Canada, should we find a sponsor of such a calibre? We were living in the States, with not a soul in Canada we would know, not to say anything of tracing a fairy-tale creature who would be able and willing to burden himself with such a risk and sacrifice, and this in favor of people completely unknown to him. Enters a stroke of luck again. In order to explain this in full, I have to go back a little bit. A Mr. Weiller in St. Paul, Minn. had in 1939 induced a good friend of his to give us an affidavit for the U. S. A. Mr. <sup>Weiller</sup> ~~W~~ had already issued several affidavits for close relatives in Germany who had entered the States as early as 1936, so he had been unable, financially, to help us personally. One of these relatives, a cousin of Mr. <sup>Weiller</sup> ~~W~~ and living in St. Paul, was a very good friend of mine, we grew up together and went through the schools together. She had been the one who had aroused Mr. W. in our behalf, in 1939. Now, it turned out that he, Mr. W. had some kind of a business connection with a certain Mr. Fainstein in Winnipeg, Canada. Mr. <sup>Weiller</sup> ~~W~~ suggested he would be glad to try his luck with this man. We clung to this one and only possibility and it seemed we had a wonderfully eloquent and

efficient advocate in Mr. W. Due to his efforts and the good references he could produce as to all of us, Mr. Fainstein agreed to accept Max as his "foster son" for the time being. He at once entrusted his lawyer with the legal procedures of freeing Max and consequently bring him back to a world without fences.

In the meantime, though living in the U.S.A., we in San Francisco, were motivated to "flee" again. How come? the astonished question will be. Just in order that, Heaven beware, our lives would not become stale routine and dull, we Jewish newcomers of the West coast got blessed with a new scare. Our special group of former Germans (the German citizenship had a long time before been taken away from us by the Nazis) was put into the one and the same pot with all the Germans in general. They looked for spies in our ranks as well as amongst the "real" Germans. The special orders and dispositions as to the Germans, not yet U.S. citizens, f.e. curfew and restriction to move from one place to another one, special finger printing, comprised also us. As the then military government, also Governor Warren, pledged "these people, too (the Germans) would be interned the same as the Japanese and Japan-Americans", we lost our nerve ( we strongly thought of our son and his fate ) left our precious little jobs, packed up and moved by a 3 day train ride (and not by Pullman either) to Minneapolis, Minn. in the MIDDLE WEST.

Here we had to start all over again with job-hunting, and our not yet being naturalized proved also there to be a severe handicap. We managed, however, and there was even one bright side: we were much nearer to the country where somewhere our boy was "hidden". We had arrived in Minneapolis in May 1942 and one year later, the happy news reached us that Max had been released from camp and was now a "civilian" again, living in Winnipeg with the

Fainstein family. Owing to his college corresponding courses whilst in detention camp, he could follow up in Winnipeg with his studies. To show our good will and our appreciation, we insisted on sending to the kind F. family, a monthly share to Max's support. What sheer delight it was when we received his first uncensored, long letter. We had so much to relate to each other, it was all a happy rediscovery and, oh, wonder, letters reached Max and us within 2 days, what first seemed almost unbelievable to us. Though the distance between us had now become relatively small, one night's train ride, we could not see him, since as non-citizens, we had to stay within the borders of the States.

Finally, in October 1945, the 3 of us got our United States citizenship- ~~What~~ a memorable, happy day this had been. And what did we do then? My husband, as the impatient leader, suggested that we go now back to "our own native" San Francisco! / Our reasoning was, good or bad, our state is now, as American citizens, forever linked with the city of our longing hearts: San Francisco. And so it came to pass.

But wait a minute: there is a tiny, little incident to be reported which was bound to take place on our way to the West-coast: the meeting again with our son, after having bid farewell from each other 7 years before at the Freiburg, resp. Frankfurt stations! I don't want to go into details about this event. It was a culmination of happiness, brought about through the cooperation of kind and sympathetic people with hearts.

After we were settled again in "our" San Francisco, had acquired jobs and an apartment, there was another milestone to be reached. Now, as American citizens, we had "first preference" in trying to be united with our son, with other words, we claimed him, and it was not too long an interval, when we greeted him on

the shores of our Pacific. He enrolled in Berkeley as student of Arts, made in time his Bachelor degree, later also his Master, all the time earning his bread and butter and tuition by working as Assistant Teacher. He then accepted a full teaching job at the University of Oklahoma in Norman.

After 4 years of this, he surprised us with the news that he has saved now enough money to do what he wants to do, become a Rabbi. He was admitted at the <sup>Union</sup> College for Reform Rabbis in Cincinnati, where he was ordained a Rabbi after 4 years of studies. My husband and I and our daughter Janet, married in S.Fr. by now, flew to Cincinnati to attend his "Coronation" as we lovingly termed his ordination. He is married now to a lovely, endearing American-Jewish girl, has a sweet, almost 13 year old daughter and holds a pulpit in the East.

All is well, what ends well!

Events in the life  
of  
Henry E. Seeling

1890 - 1909

pg. 1 - 10

at my parents home  
at school

life in a rural city      = = = apprenticeship      = =

1910 - 1913

pg. 10 - 13

Berlin -- Stettin

1914 - 1919

pg. 14 - 29

Worldwar I 1914-1918

1920 - 1938

pg. 30 - 73

settlement in Loerrach

marriage and family life

development of business

November 1938

destruction of Jewish living in Germany 51-73

and preceding activity in Europe 1914-1938

1939 - 1940

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preparing for the emigration

Panama      = = = America.

since 1940

pg. 97 - 115

life and work in America

historic events

1960 retirement

On the 18th of June 1890 or the 30th of Sivan 5650 according to the Jewish calendar, near midnight a boy was born on the second floor of the building 207 Breite Strasse, i.e., Broad St. in the small rural town of 4500 inhabitants of Gartz at the river "Oder" belonging to the district of the city of Stettin, the capital of the province of Pomerania in the kingdom of Prussia, incorporated in the empire of Germany. It must have been a day of great joy because it was the first time a boy was born to carry on the proud name of the Selinger clan. My parents Hermann and Johanna could joyfully prepare for a big family reunion at the birth-milah. The parents of my father lived just across the Oder in Greifenhagen, a town of about 7000 inhabitants. My mother belonged to the widely branched out mishpachah of the Rosendorff's. Six families with this name lived in our town with a Jewish congregation of about 25 families.

The city of Gartz was once built as a fortress with strong watch towers and gates and ramparts surrounding the town. The Oder added to the strength of defence against any possible attack. With the passing of the medieval times the importance of Gartz as a fortress had ceased. The fortifications provided the town with fine museum pieces. It is a picturesque town from this point of view. Untouched by the progress of time the little town sank into oblivion. In the 19th century the town had harbored the garrisons of some infantry and cavalry regiments. They were on guard whenever the far away Russians should get the foolish idea to march all the way along the Baltic Sea to storm Berlin, the capital of Germany, about 70 miles away from Gartz. When Germany, in 1871, was united to an empire with ever growing strength as a military power, the troops in Gartz were withdrawn. How could the Russians succeed when strong German military forces could intercept them right along the Eastern frontier? Gartz once more went back to sleep.

A main street, part of the great highway, leading through the middle of the town toward Berlin with two parallels to the right and left of it and several cross connections formed mainly the network of the streets. One of the larger cross branches was the Broadway on which my parents' house was situated. It was a two-story building, solidly built of stone. The larger part of the first

floor was occupied by the store with a rich assortment of textiles, men's suits and shoes. A great show window with an exhibition of merchandise invited the prospective buyers. Everytime the door was opened, a bell rang audibly also in the rear rooms. There was the living room, the dining room, and the kitchen. The second floor was divided into several sleeping rooms. An attraction was the "salon" with expensive furniture; it was the sitting room for the visitors. A large <sup>front</sup> <sup>house</sup> door and a passage through the house, <sup>large</sup> enough <sup>wide</sup> to drive through with horse and wagon, led to the courtyard. A stable for horses, stock rooms for coal and wood, a barn for the coaches and sleighs, a laundry with bath and toilets surrounded the courtyard. The stately premises had belonged to Moses and Mina Rosendorff; both died when I still was very young. The house was the home of my mother, born 30th of January 1866. The Rosendorff clan in the town were well-to-do people; they had promoted the planting of tobacco in a wide circle around the town and kept ever spreading over larger areas in the country. The occupation of the ~~inhabitants~~ <sup>inhabitants</sup> was mainly agriculture: grain, potatoes, white beets. for sugar besides the tobacco growth and dairy products. Near the Oder lived a small number of fishermen. It was a struggle for the people of the town to make ends meet; ~~There was strong competition from the large landowners who let toil by cheap wages the hired hands and the season workers who came from Poland.~~ Tobacco was the domain of the small farmers; it brought the desired ~~hand~~ <sup>cash</sup> <sup>at home</sup> <sup>all</sup> <sup>from</sup> <sup>Poland</sup> cash. The fall season was a gay time when the planters drove, in big wagon loads, the tobacco to the city - factories where the dried leaves, strung in thousands of bundles, were further processed. Hundreds of the residents of Gartz found work in the tobacco industry of the Rosendorffs.

My parents were married in the year 1887. In the following year, on 22nd of December, my sister Minna was born. My father had taken over the store and pretty soon enlarged it; his enterprise was prosperous. He was born on the 3rd of May 1856 in Sinzlow, a village near Greifenhagen; he had received his commercial training in Stettin, a large city and a port of call of the mouth of the Oder flowing into the Baltic Sea. My Father had two sisters, my aunts Amalia and Flora and one brother; my uncle Franz. They all were married.





and did the same with Minna who stood shyly backward. The main attraction was little Moritz; she took him from his crib and fondled him heartily. Our "new Mother" was about 5'2" tall with a pretty face and rather full figure. My Father was not much taller; his face looked rosy, framed with a reddish beard, his body strongly built. Their matrimony was not blessed with children. Our Mother put the house in good order and supervised our education and well-being; she was a good cook and I was delighted with the fine cakes and pastry. A maid assisted Mother in her work which was not so easy. In the kitchen was a hearth fed with coal and wood. The big stoves of Dutch tiles built up heigh to the ceiling in all rooms, needed ~~in~~ <sup>for</sup> the long and strong winters the same fuel. There ~~was~~ no water pipes with faucets; the water was carried ~~on in~~ in two pales from the next water pump about 100 yards away. The house was lighted by kerosine lamps, and only after many years gas was substituted in the streets and in many of the buildings of the town - but for lighting of lamps only.

When I advanced to the 3rd class, I was then 8 years old, — I was well established as a pupil and got accustomed to an earnest study at home. My grades were satisfactory. I didn't get any help from my parents. An occasional question whether I had learned my lessons showed their interest. Several times of the year I received a report which my Father signed. On Wednesday afternoon and on Sunday forenoon together three hours, I attended the religious school, conducted by the cantor of the congregation; he was a poor teacher, because he did not like teaching. He repeatedly told his class that we all were "Grobkoepp" i.e. coarse heads. In a preschool, so to say, our Father instructed my sister and me in the reading of the Hebrew alphabet. It was always on shabbath afternoons between 4 and 5 o'clock. . There were no lessons without tears and when finished, we left immediately for the street to relax and play. With the age of 13 years the instruction in Jewish knowledge was terminated. The last year was in preparation of my barmitzvah. About a dozen students of different ages, boys and girls together, had formed the school. Not all of them came regularly. The result was lamentable and very poor for any Jew.

The school year 1899 to 1900 was decisive for my further schooling, since my parents allowed me to enter the "Gymnasium", a

*decided to send him to*

<sup>entering a</sup> school of higher education with nine classes, <sup>was the preparation</sup> ~~in preparation for~~ the study at the university of the student's choice. The main courses at the gymnasium were German language and literature, Latin, Greek, French, Mathematics, Physics, History, Geography, then also Botany, Zoology, Singing, Painting, Gymnastics. The number of all disciples amounted from 100 - 120 in the average. <sup>the number of the boys</sup> ~~The number of the boys~~ from Gartz about 10%. All the other ones came from different parts of Germany or even from foreign countries. Nearly all of them lived in a huge foster home with board and room, where their school work was supervised by employed academic teachers. Some professors took up also students <sup>to their homes</sup> ~~to their homes~~ under the same conditions. This was a setback to the Gartzers <sup>who were left</sup> ~~who were left~~ alone with their homework; therefore great efforts were necessary to compete with the comrades <sup>of the class</sup> ~~of the class~~. The alumni, as the foster sons were called, kept strictly to themselves. <sup>I worked on my home</sup> ~~I worked on my home~~ lessons in the upper classes usually till late in the night. It was <sup>a</sup> ~~a~~ big advantage that I had my own study which was my sleeping sleeping room also. I stood aloof, engrossed in my study and grew up like a plant in the garden <sup>by</sup> ~~by~~ rain, wind and sunshine that Heaven bestowed on me in my life at home. With the day I entered the highschool (gymnasium), my Father had given up his peculiar method of education. It seems he was no longer convinced that it would be of further help. Before that, when there was any complaint about my conduct, he just went to the store, took one of the boards which were there to store the merchandise and walloped me without much explanation. And then he forgot about the whole thing and so did I. My Father kept his religion rather in an orthodox way, pressing his thoughts into limited frontiers of a small circle of the vast Jewish-religious horizon in contrast to his learned Father. But the ground on which both stood, was solid rock. One could give them the motto: "Whoever trusts in G." will be surrounded by His grace. On Shabbos, beginning with Friday evening, the business was closed; in the same way each holiday was welcomed. Three times a day, on such occasions my Father went to the synagogue; I accompanied him most of the time. Each morning, day was started with morning prayers in tallis and tefillin. Shabbos and Vontof were marked at home by special dinners, skilfully prepared, besides the self-made braided breads, called also "challah"; On Friday-evening Mother lighted the candles; on Pesach the Seder on both

<sup>2) Gartz itself contributed</sup> ~~2) Gartz itself contributed~~ <sup>abt. 10%</sup> ~~abt. 10%~~

nights were highlights of joy for the entire family. My grandfather as well as my father had wonderful voices. On Sukkoth we had our own sukkah built in the courtyard. ~~Somkippur~~ was a fast day, for us children also, after the age of 13 years. This was the way of life that lingers on in my mind as a joyful memorial.

It is strange to me as I look back to the past, ~~time~~ how little the ~~next~~ relatives of my Parents had the urge to visit ~~each other~~ in a family gathering. There are only two outstanding events. The first was the "Golden Wedding" of my Father's Parents. It occurred in January 1901. We, as grandchildren, had the time of our life. Our follies found an excuse; we were excited in preparation of the festive event. Each of us had to learn a poem appropriate to the occasion; a special feat of the grandchildren was the performance of a theatrical play for the ~~amusement~~ <sup>honour</sup> of the Grandparents and their guests. I had some difficulties to find the right poem for myself in the bookstore of Gartz. When I came to the store with my request, the shop keeper, well known to me, ~~gave~~ <sup>gave</sup> me a book containing a poem he thought just right for me to recite on the Golden Wedding. I read it and gave it back, shaking my head in disapproval. Reading the poem for himself he said: "I see what you mean; here it ~~speaks~~ <sup>says</sup> always of Jesus. But that does not matter. You Jews believe in Moses; thus, wherever it says Jesus you say Moses." "No", I said, "we do not direct our prayers to Moses; he was a mortal man as all of us and we do not pray to any man." He was startled about my answer and told me that he could not help me. My Father ~~did it~~ <sup>did it</sup> by bringing the "right" poem on his next trip to Stettin. Thinking back of this incident, it remains a mystery to me, how it came to me to give the unforgettable answer above-- at my age of 10½ years -- without having at that young age, any knowledge of the fundamentals of the Jewish religion. Finally, the day ~~day~~ of the Golden Wedding ~~was~~ <sup>was</sup> there and we betook ourselves to Gröfenhagen. There was an endless welcome with uncles, aunts and cousins who arrived by and by. ~~Members of the congregation~~ <sup>Members of the congregation</sup> where ~~President~~ <sup>the minister</sup> Grandfather ~~was~~ <sup>participated</sup> as well as the City authorities and many delegations from different organizations, among them the minister of the Protestant church. My Grandparents were very active in the public welfare and in special affairs. , Jewish and non-Jewish alike. In the late afternoon, the parade of

\* Jesus is mentioned 70 many times



the wellwishers came to an end. The tables were arranged for the festive dinner. Everything in <sup>grand</sup> great style.

Uncle Franz as the main speaker, delivered a speech, well prepared. He started with the early family history, pointing out that the Selinger's Forefathers were once expelled from Austria under the reign of Emperor Leopold I. ( 1658 - 1705 ) in the year 1670 . The Catholic Church, under the influence of the Jesuits was declared as the only religion of the State. No other religion could be tolerated. The Jews, steadfast to their faith, had no choice but to leave the "Fatherland". A small number of them was permitted by Frederick William ,The Great, "Elector" (1640-1688) to settle in the Mark, in the district of Brandenburg. There we find the Selinger family near Frankfort at the Oder ,settled as farmers and merchants. Frankfort was at that time more important than the capital Berlin: In the year 1851 my Grandfather ,24 years old , married Henriette Rosenstrauch who was about one year older than her husband. A few years later the Selingers moved to the village <sup>nearby</sup> Sinzlow where they settled as farmers and wholesalers of seed for the agriculture. Some years later, as the children grew up, they established their residence in the nearby City of Greifenhagen. His main business was now to parcel out arable land for the settlement of farmers; he also kept the seed store. The name Selinger was the byword for honest dealings by all who knew him. Many years after his death when I was a soldier in the first World war (1914-1918), my superior treated me with preference because his father bought once his farm from my Grandfather. When the Selinger family was well settled, my Grandfather bought a fine two story building with a warehouse in the rear, located at the market place; they occupied the whole second floor. After the speech of Uncle Franz, nearly everyone rose to his feet, spoke a few words and finished with a toast <sup>to</sup> my Grandparents. After the dinner we children had our turn. My lengthy poem started with the words : "Am Golde haengt, nach Golde draengt heut alles in the world" That means "Everyone is attached to the gold and presses for the possession of it in the world of today." Our theater performance <sup>finished</sup> the Golden Wedding celebration, to the amusement of the whole audience.

On the 27th of June 1903, the second and last "grand gathering" occurred when nearly all of our relatives gathered at the home of

my Parents to celebrate my bar-mitzwah. It remained the only festive event on such a large scale in the house of my Parents. It was a <sup>very</sup> lucky day for me and a joy for the participants. The house was newly decorated; there were also new furnitures in the saloon and the livingroom downstairs. As it was the custom, I read in the synagogue the haftarah, 1.Sam.11,14 & 15 & 12,1-22, relative to the sidre korach. Then an examination in questions and answers between the cantor and myself followed. At home, during the dinner, I made a ~~greater~~ speech. All these objects had to be learned by heart. Everything went off flawlessly. I also sang the prayer after dinner. Never again in my life was I congratulated and lauded by so many in admiring appreciation, as on ~~that~~ day of my barmitzwah. All day long, members of the congregation dropped in as gratulants. It goes without saying that the dinner was excellently prepared by a hired cook. A lot of presents ~~were~~ given to me. Really, a day worthy to be remembered throughout my life.

My Grandparents had invited me many times through the years, for a visit; they liked me very much and ~~I was filled with great~~ joy. <sup>to be with them</sup> I always felt content and lucky to be with them in <sup>their</sup> home filled with peace and love. Shortly after Pesach 1904, my Grandmother died suddenly. I was stunned by the message because only the Sunday before, she had visited us in Gartz. A few months later, shortly after fall holidays, my Grandfather followed her to the grave. I happened <sup>just on this day</sup> to be on a visit there. I was sitting besides his bed, since he did not rise in the morning as usual. He was awake and we exchanged a few words. Then he fell asleep --and never awoke again. Peaceful as his life, was his death; a man of spiritual strength and greatness had left the earth. My Grandparents were buried at the Jewish cemetery in Greifenhagen. Both had the same big attendance at their funerals. I was with my Father near the hearse; when I looked back at the following, there seemed to be no end of it. All wanted to pay the last tribute to express ~~their~~ high esteem, my Grandparents had earned through their good deeds among Jews and Christians alike. With the death of my Grandparents, a most delightful world of my childhood went with them to the graveyard. <sup>with them</sup>

In the following years I kept busy with studying and advanced each year to the next higher class. Our Jewish congregation in Gartz had lost its vitality with the departure of the Rosendorff

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clan. As the <sup>members</sup> heads of the families grew older, they moved away to bigger cities, mostly to Stettin or Berlin. Their sons became lawyers, doctors, engineers etc. but none of them desired to be the successor of their fathers. The daughters married according to the wealth of their parents, and left Gartz also. The best taxpayers gone and scarcely enough men left to form a minyan, the synagogue was left desolate. The tobacco business was transformed to a large corporation, and the administration moved to Schwedt at the Oder, a city of ab. 12000 people, 10 miles from Gartz away. With the end of the school year, Easter 1908, I left the Gymnasium with a concluding testimony about my success in all subjects and excellent behavior. At that time my sister left home to fill a place as a companion and assistant to the lady of the house. My Father accompanied my sister and was satisfied when he came back. It was a well to do family with three children. Then my Parents decided to move to Greifenhagen. The business was dissolved and the house sold. My Brother continued in <sup>the</sup> gymnasium of Stettin and commuted daily between the two cities, by train 20 minutes each way. Now the question had to be solved what to do with me. ~~To~~ study at the University was ruled out. The cost was high, and so was the dowry in the case my sister would marry. Sorry to say, a trade was not considered to be on the level of our rank, at that time. There was only left the profession of a merchant what I disliked. The transitional stage from the life as a student which I wished to ~~prefer~~ to the banal one as a merchant-apprentice weighed for a long time upon me, till I finally was reconciled with it.

In October 1908 I started my apprenticeship as a business volunteer and finished two years later on account of my fine abilities. The commercial house I entered was the best recommended, in the city of Treptow at the river Rega as well as in the whole Province of Pomerania except the City of Stettin. The enterprise was a family affair. The elder son of the Rewald family was considered to be the main boss and besides he directed the important departments of men's and ladies' fabrics. His brother was manager of the shoe and men's suits department; his two <sup>Kunigunde</sup> sisters managed the departments of lady's wear and necessities. <sup>to be in</sup> Two large floors were reserved for the business and the third floor for living quarters in a modern three story building, about 10 years old. The attic with a greater number of sleeping rooms,

nicely divided for the boys and girls served as dormitory. The father and the ~~wife~~ mother of the boss lived in the same house and had their sleeping quarters in the attic also, on the boys' and on the girls' side respectively. Both were very busy in the household.

There were 30-35 employees throughout the year. Working hours lasted from 8 o'clock in the morning to 7 in the evening. Sunday till 2 o'clock in the afternoon with two hours closing time between 10 and 12 o'clock. It was a vivid business all the year <sup>traffic</sup> around and <sup>traffic</sup> grew to tremendous dimensions before the holidays, especially before Christmas or on the fairs in spring and fall. Then, after the shop was closed, the work ~~continued~~ <sup>was</sup> not seldom till 11 o'clock. Nevertheless, it was in the whole an agreeable family life. On Christmas each of the employees got a valuable gift. I for example received the material for a fine black suit, which the ~~taylor~~ <sup>tailor</sup> processed into a frock coat. I wore it ~~still~~ <sup>on</sup> my wedding day and on holidays, for many years. The business-life was an ordinary money making affair in my eyes, and I missed my books, any good book to nourish the starving mind. But ~~there~~ <sup>was</sup> simply no time to read anything. By the way, there was not one single book to arouse the interest as a Jew. Did I miss it? No, because of my ignorance. Yet there was a sore sentiment in my heart about the Shabbath, which had lost its holiness and turned to a common workday. It was very hard to overcome the contrast in the house of my Parents and the "Jewish home" of my boss's. Roshhashana and Jom Kippur were the only days the business was reluctantly closed. The life in the city with about 20.000 residents was dull. Movies and dancing bars <sup>was</sup> all. During the summer the nearby city of Kolberg a renowned health-resort at the Baltic Sea offered a pleasant afternoon. My apprenticeship came to an end in October 1910. I had no desire to toil longer than necessary. I returned to my Parents in Greifenhagen.

My Sister was still in her old position. My Brother advanced at school with best results. Although my former boss had <sup>recommended</sup> ~~furnished~~ me with a wonderful testimony about my ability as a young merchant and about my excellent conduct, it was hard to find a suitable position to further my "on-the-job" training. After many unsuccessful trials, my father conceived a fine plan to help me. He travelled with me to Berlin, a city with about four millions inhabitants and succeeded to find a job for me in one of the greatest textile wholesale houses in Germany. It was a large five story building.



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My father was there well known through his former business connections. The working hours started at 8 O'clock and were finished at 5.30 with  $\frac{1}{2}$  hour off for lunch; on Saturday we closed at noon. The salary was small, but I managed to get along and didn't mind the short comings toward the end of the month. I was in many respects rewarded. I gained a broad knowledge in many lines in this famous commercial enterprise. During the winter-months, from October to April, I attended a commercial college and studied economics, social and commercial laws, bookkeeping, correspondence and the differences in qualities of merchandise etc. to complete my training. I saw the necessity to come in contact with the living world and participate in its activities. The glory of the school days had to vanish. Theater, operas and musical performances with exquisite players became unforgettable events and conquered the days of the past. Berlin was the right place to bring a young man's ambition to perfection, if he desired to do so.

My Sister who had returned some months ago to Greifenhagen, announced to me her engagement and had started to prepare for the wedding which was to take place in a hotel in Stettin. The bridegroom was a good-looking young man with agreeable manners. The bride received, as it was customary in those days, a respectable dowry in money as well as in furnitures for a 3 to 4 room apartment. The young couple established their home in a small town in East Pomerania which was his birthplace. Yet, no lucky star shone upon them. The young husband had returned more than a year ago from military service with an injury of the spine when he was thrown off riding on a horse. It was considered cured when it suddenly flared up again so violently that a difficult operation in Berlin had to be performed. He died before the first year of their married life had ended. Several months later, her household dissolved, my Sister came on my invitation to Berlin. She found quickly a place as a companion and housekeeper in the home of a prominent attorney and his wife. We enjoyed many pleasant hours together. During the summer we often made excursions to the nice surroundings of Berlin, or during the winter, when we remained in the city, we visited a cafe or even a theater together.

My work in the textile house came to a sudden halt by a strange incident. In the beginning of December 1911 one day I came upstairs a little earlier, from lunch in the basement canteen. Approaching

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my desk I surprised my department boss with his secretary, a nice red haired girl, sitting on his knees, while he held her in his arms. He asked me to bring up for her a sandwich and a glass of beer. I refused, telling him that the office boy would appear pretty soon; the boss was, by the way, married, but as I was told, had started with divorce proceedings.

It was the usual function that everyone got one Mark; about 25 cents; as an "increase" of his salary, on the eve of Christmas. I didn't get it and I suspected that it was due to his influence <sup>of my</sup> since I had lost his friendship. I brought my complaint to the chief executive with the title of counselor of commerce. When he promised to ~~talk~~ <sup>talk</sup> it over with my dept. boss, I told him that I better quit at once when my work doesn't deserve the monthly increase of 25 ct. On that evening I met my sister and told her the story; ~~she~~ <sup>he</sup> blamed my hasty decision. When I told her that I was short of money because the cashier had already closed his books and I didn't get my salary for December, she handed to me for my consolation 2. Mark (50 ct.) Then we went to a big cafe house at the Potsdamer Place in the heart of the downtown district. A large orchestra played the newest songs and -- my sorrows were forgotten.

Shortly before New Year 1912 I learned about a vacancy as a bookkeeper <sup>the owner</sup> at a well known fashion magazine and to my own surprise my application for the job was accepted. Working hours 8.30 to 4 o'clock. No Saturday work. Since the company was associated with a printing plant, I learned about its technique and besides to distinguish the many kinds of paper and its qualities. This proved to be very important to my ~~later~~ <sup>later</sup> activities, nearly 10 years later. In search of more knowledge in Judaism, its religion and history, I joined the "Young People" organisation and participated in a half year course with 24 lectures. I also enjoyed visiting the synagogues and followed with keen interest the somewhat philosophical sermons of the best known Rabbis of Germany.

~~My salary was better~~ <sup>I made more money</sup> than ever before; it was augmented during the winter season by my <sup>work</sup> after 5 o'clock till 8 or 9 or even longer, as a salesman at the textile branch of one of the world's famous dept. stores in Berlin. As a private teacher of German to foreign students I earned enough to pay for room and other ~~living~~ <sup>living</sup> expenses. I lived and dressed better. I was able to repay my sister for her kindness with many presents, when the occasion arose.

Some of my Mother's relatives lived also in Berlin. There was her Brother, Uncle Benno, his wife, Aunt Trude and there <sup>was</sup> daughter Hilda; further <sup>my</sup> Mother's Sister, Aunt Mathilde, a widow, and her Son Bruno. My Sister and I were often invited to their social gatherings on Sunday evenings which were always very enjoyable at Uncle Benno's house.

In Spring 1913 a big spectacle occurred in Berlin. The Emperor William the second celebrated his 25th anniversary as Emperor and <sup>his</sup> son, his Son Frederic-William, the crown, <sup>son</sup> celebrated his wedding. The main event was a huge military parade in the presence of many military and civil celebrities, among them the King of England and the Czar of Russia and others. Looking at the theatrical demonstration, everybody enjoyed the display without a thought how near the possibility of war was which started first of August 1914.

In the fall of 1913 reading one of the leading newspaper, of Berlin, I encountered an add of a large fish cannery and herring wholesale business in Stettin, looking for a correspondent and plant bookkeeper, promising an attractive salary. As an answer upon my application I received the invitation for an interview with the director who <sup>had</sup> planned to be in Berlin where the company maintained a branch. I was engaged and made my arrangements to move to Stettin. Since my Parents still lived in Greifenhagen, I took a furnished room in the apartment of an elderly lady and her Mother who <sup>was</sup> 95 years old and surprisingly alert. My field of activity was a fruitful one and was of mutual satisfaction between the company and myself. There were 300 employees in the plant. At the start of the first Worldwar, first of August 1914, the boss made a petition to have my entrance in the military service deferred on account of my being indispensable in a vital enterprise. It was granted for six months. In the beginning of 1915 the boss wanted to prolong it by renewing his petition. But I refused strongly and was drafted in February 1915. Germany lived in a turmoil of patriotic emotions. Victory reports <sup>came in</sup> arrived from the West and East fronts. Everybody believed that the war would be finished victoriously <sup>by</sup> the end of the year 1914. But in December, the war news were partially alarming. In the East, large Russian armies moved westwards to the German border, the first signs that the times ahead would <sup>be</sup> tougher. More and more men were called to the arms. Our chief accountant belonged to the reserve and had left in

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the first week of the mobilization . I had the confidence of my boss and was promoted to the vacant position. I worked usually from 8 o'clock in the morning till 10.0' in the evening. — *On Spring 1915*  
I had entered the army cheerfully but to the regret of my boss. The training for the war was considerably shortened. It was supposed to be continued behind the front line. In March my Parents moved from Greifenhagen to Stettin. They had rented a roomy apartment and offered me to move in. My Brother had entered the army as a volunteer at the age of 18 years old and chosen the artillery. His garrison was near the western frontier. I gave notice to my landlady for the first of April. My daily military service lasted from 7 o'clock in the morning to 5 in the afternoon. Soldiers from Stettin were allowed to lodge at home. *There was a pause from 12-3 o'clock.*

I was acquainted with a girl in the office where I had worked. I had dated her a few times and we met casually again. Now the queer idea to get married was quite epidemic. By the thousands, many of them had not known each other for more than a couple of days, ~~when they~~ followed the trend of time and got married. My girl was no exception. When we both met one evening, she managed to pass along the City Hall on her way home. When I noticed a long queue before the entrance of the City hall, I asked innocently: "What is going on so late at this place?" In answering my question she pulled my arm and said: "Let us join, they all want to get married this night and we can have the same pleasure, following their example." I was startled to the utmost. I said: "No, for Heaven's sake --no, no! War time can't be an excuse for foolish things to do. You can not decide on the spur of the moment on such a most serious subject. That has to be thought over and over again. Nothing is more remote from me than the idea of getting married in the moment I have to go to war. Join the queue, just as if you would pick up a  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. of butter or  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. of sugar on your ration card. No. No, never! Besides what would my Parents think of me, what would my Father say if I told them: "On my way from the barracks home I got married!" "O," she answered peevishly, "your Father has nothing to say; we place him before the *fait accompli* meaning *accomplished fact*". But that was not for me. It was the end of our friendship.

One day in the beginning of May 1915 the rumors intensified that huge reinforcements were ready to be moved to the different fronts.

*sections*

The whole city was alarmed . Whoever had somebody in the army, came running to see him off. But it was a false alarm. A few days later, in the late afternoon the real thing happened. The troupes were led to the freight yard where they took their places in the designed cars to their respective designation. After a short farewell to my Parents, who had accompanied the parting soldiers, the train left -- slowly the station.

Our detachment was on its way to the Russian front. In the middle of the night the train stopped to change the engine . We were on the railway station of the City of Tilsit in East Prussia. Everybody was allowed to leave the car to get a cup of coffee, the Red Cross had prepared for the passing soldiers. I got my canteen also filled and rushed back to reach my compartment in the moment the train started to move. More than twenty men were left behind; they got, of course, an unfriendly welcome when they several days later, presented themselves at our headquarters.

In August 1914 two Russian armies had invaded the province of East Prussia which was one of the oldest provinces of the Prussian monarchy. The reconquest of East Prussia was vitally necessary to the Germans. This task was given to the General von Hindenburg, who succeeded with limited forces to gain a complete victory in the area of the Masurian lakes and swamps; today known as the battle of Tannenberg, the name of a small town nearby. On our way to the front we passed the battle ground in the open field and saw the devastated cities and villages. The ravages of fighting and bombardment offered us the first lesson to understand the meaning of war. The Russians had retreated beyond the border of Germany. The bitter-cold winters, lasting well into April, prevented major field operations. But on our arrival in May 1915, the belligerent armies were in full swing with offence and counteroffence. Russia is an extraordinary large country of immense planes, lakes, swamps, deserts, and forests, perhaps forty times bigger than Germany, the frontier about seven times as large as the one between Germany and France. Truly a difficult task to defend a battle line of several hundreds of miles. Our sector was situated about 50 miles off the Prussian border and beginning in the North near the City of Memel at the Baltic Sea, extended about 150 miles to the South. During the time I was at the front, the occupation of Russia was gradually enlarged; it reached nearly its most spacious extend

in the war. The Russian soldier was an obstinate fighter although hampered by the maladministration of his government. The Russians had many outstanding strategists. The flawless success of huge pincer movements, directed by the Germans in order to envelope whole Russian armies with no exit of escape had only happened once at Tannenberg as mentioned before. The Russians made skilful use of their vast territory, yielding space only after inflicting great losses to the enemy and then retreated in good order; in this way they were not beaten to submission. The furious battles which threatened anew with the invading of East Prussia forced the Germans repeatedly to withdraw, at crucial moments, troops from the Western front to stem the Russian tide. The man power of Russia is big; each year they may draft one million men easily. A novelty in the tactical conduct was used by the Russians attacking on different points of the whole battle front simultaneously, depriving the German commander of moving his troops from one sector to another at ease. The war is a terrible affair where all demons are let loose in mind and heart of human beings. The sufferings of the fighting men on each side as well as those endured by the inhabitants driven in naked poverty from their destroyed homes, are unimaginably cruel. In a close combat, when the soldiers thrust their bayonets at each other, in the chest, their faces furiously distorted, no human traces are left. The shudder at this hell of murder never leaves the mind of man again. The answer to the question whether the cruelty of wild beasts is perhaps permanently implanted in the human character, came about 25 years later to me in the affirmative, alas! Thanks Heaven that I was spared being actively engaged in the ~~retreat~~ ~~fight~~. According to my military passbook I "participated" in the battles near Augustowo, Suwalki, Ostrolenka, Warsaw, Smorgon, Narotch lake Twereth, Kowno, Vilna and different other places. The Germans had occupied Russian territory, alright; but great as these exploits were, they had not fulfilled the task of dealing the fatal stroke of destruction to the Russian armies. Hand in hand with their retreat went a terrifying and systematic devastation. The plight of the civilians took the dimensions of great tragedies. At the end of 1915, the Germans had nearly reached the farthest line of their advance into the territory of Russia, running from the Gulf of Riga almost straight down to the State of Roumania. To

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secure their defence line the Germans put much effort in building trenches, field ~~forts~~ and, in preparation of captured fortresses to ward off the expected offensive, ~~in the~~ approaching year of 1916. On 27th of January of that year, I left the battle front.

At this point of my narrative I deem it right to relate some of my personal adventures.

One day we had speedily to prepare trenches for an expected Russian attack. The task was equally divided among the soldiers assigned to the job. I eagerly went ahead and overtook my fellows to the left and right when a comrade next to me looked up and said: Selinger, man do you intend to stir with your shovel the whole of Russia on one day?" I said smiling: "No" and slackened to fall in line with the other fellows.

The battle raged between the city of Suwalki and the forrest of Augustowo. During the night our battalion was alarmed by the threatening attack of the Russians. Our company assembled quickly. Orders were issued. A few men, courageous enough to lay high explosives at the Russian center fortification in preparation of a successful attack were sought as volunteers and asked to step forward, preferably unmarried men. I whispered to my right neighbor: "Come on, let us ~~come~~ to the call!" He firmly refused, saying: "Stay here! Who can by the flick of the torch read your passbook? We are all married. Remain here!" But he could not detract me from doing what I considered as my duty. Within five minutes six men with me as the leader sneaked up with the heavy and very dangerous load to our designated object. We succeeded! Then, while we still were retiring, a tremendous explosion shook the earth. I shouted to my comrades to spread out over the field when at that moment, the Russian search lights beamed - - and our area of retreat was spread with innumerable bullets. I reached miraculously sound and safe our company and reported back. I never saw or met the other boys who had been with me. But the Russians had to yield their fortified position by the following attack - - and the city of Suwalki passed to the Germans for good. - At noon of the following day was roll call. The Colonel called me to come forward and praised my valient deed. Then, turning to me, he asked whether I wanted the "Iron Cross" as decoration for it. I said: "No, thank you. I only did my duty; no reward is expected for it." Later my non-commissioned officer (sergeant), Mr. Guse, a principal of a school in Stettin, told me that the colonel's question was only an oratorical

one and needed no answer. Besides, a common soldier is not supposed to utter his opinion.

About four weeks later I was commanded as order bearer to the main office of the battalion. My ability to take dictation by short hand was hereby essential. The captain as commander of the battalion comprising four companies was a puzzling character. He was an insignificant civil servant in the City-hall of Stettin. The fast advance in his military career fostered a mild stroke of arrogance in him when he became an important person. Sometimes he drank too much and was quarrelsome with everybody. His deputy officer, Mr. Scholz, was in civil life a coal mine inspector from Silesia (East Prussia) and his assistant <sup>the</sup> above mentioned sergeant. Both showed a friendly <sup>and</sup> conduct to me. From the many stories, though worthwhile to mention, only a few may <sup>be</sup> inserted to avoid an undue length of my writing. On my errands, day or night, I was often in great danger of injury or capture by the Russians.

One day I passed a lonesome farmhouse. With the help of my polish booklet with phrases and sentences I thought to inquire about the direction to a certain village which was the seat of a divisional staff. I entered the house, saw with astonishment about 30 men and as many women in two adjacent rooms. The women screamed in shrill voices when they saw me. Along the wall in the entrance hall were rifles, bundles of ammunition and even hand grenades. It was a critical situation. I went outside, my rifle handy, and hinted at the man approaching the window to come out. He obliged and accompanied me, as ordered <sup>at a</sup> short distance. <sup>He wanted to</sup> These soldiers I met <sup>were</sup> deserters of the retreating Russian army which had passed their dwelling district and were desperately bound not to be taken as captives by the Germans. I reported the incident on my return, but a search revealed that they had left; for them, the war was finished. Their military equipment was abandoned.

As a messenger on my way to one of the fortresses near Warsaw, I found myself caught in the bombardment and had to hide while the bullets were flying above me. The next day I found an opportunity to continue on my way. A few days <sup>later</sup> I returned to my home office. There they already had given up ~~the~~ hope for me and <sup>was going to list</sup> wanted me ~~listed~~ as missing in action.

On one occasion I had to make a detour to dispatch a message while the staff of our battalion moved to new quarters. I had only a vague idea where I could find them later. On my way I met two



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women who spoke a little German which they had learned as farm hands in Germany. Since I knew that the Captain and his adjutant were ahead of me in a carriage drawn by two white horses, I asked if they had seen such a vehicle. They affirmed and pointed out <sup>the</sup> the direction the men had taken. In my joy I thanked <sup>them</sup> and gave them the rest of my bread ration for the whole day. Pretty soon I reached a completely devastated village with smoking debris. The settlement was situated in a small valley, bounded on each side by a range of hills. Nobody was there; it was a dead silence. Suddenly, from a camouflaged observation point in a hidden "fox hole", a German sergeant emerged and asked me to my greatest astonishment: "Comrade, are you going to fight the Russians single handed?" Then he explained that only ten minutes ago the Russians, after a stubborn fight, had taken their new positions in prepared trenches behind the hill range which I started audaciously to climb while the Germans occupied the opposite range. "A few steps more", I was told, "and the Russians will perceive you through their periscopes. You may be the target of a hundred bullets all at once." I thanked him heartedly and went back whence I came. About one hour later I met troop contingents on the march and learned from them the location of the new quarters where I was welcomed after arrival.

The fourth company was given new quarters amidst a big forest. I left the captain's office at dusk to transmit his message. It was deep darkness when I, on my return, aimlessly walked between trees and bushes groping along to find a path in the supposed direction. No light could be used on account of the Russian marauders. Suddenly, while stepping forward, I plunged down flying as it were through a vacuum. When I had recovered from the shock I noticed that I miraculously was not injured despite the considerable height <sup>like a</sup> two story building. I saw that I had reached the floor of a highway cut through a mountain and leveled to the plain of the country side. By sheer luck I then took the right turn towards my destination. The next day, the captain praised my night excursion, although he didn't know the whole story.

One afternoon I came to the <sup>office</sup> bureau, took my place at a small table and began to transmit the stenographic notes to common handwriting. Just then the commander entered the room. The Adjutant showed him the new guns which were delivered in the forenoon to

replace the older models; he called special attention to the new lock and tried to open it. When he failed the commander took the gun impatiently from his hands and said: "Let me show you; you don't know how to handle it." He fumbled at the lock when all of a sudden a bullet sprang from the gun. It passed very sharp over my head, in fact touching slightly my hair and then hit the wall behind me. I was told later that I had turned as white as the sheet of paper I was writing on. If I had lifted my head at the crucial moment only  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch the shot would have been fatal to me. The captain put the gun in the corner and with a look at me left without a word.

In September 1915 I asked for it and got a furlough of three days to participate in the Yomkippur service in the next German town near the frontier. I left early in the morning I left early in the morning from the nearest station mounting a freight car. The first German town, Willenberg, I had in mind, was destroyed. I couldn't help but continue to the next town, Ortelsburg, where I arrived about 10 o'clock in the evening. I had missed to my dismay the Kolnids. The next morning I found the congregation assembled in a rented hall because the synagogue was damaged by war. After the nine prayer, the soldiers passing through the city were invited to a meal in a private home. That was generous enough. But I could not follow the invitation because the captain had asked me to procure for him six bottles of a certain kind of mineral water for his well being. I could not delay the purchase after the dinner in fear that the drugstore may be closed by then. In the outskirts of the town I found finally the desired brand. The druggist was active in the "Red Cross" and begged me to take with me a big bundle of woolen underwear donated for the front soldiers. I couldn't refuse and had to wait till the package was ready. But then it was too late to go to the designated house or any other place for dinner. I passed the night in a transient camp for soldiers where I was told that at five a.m. a freight train leaves for the front. I took the occasion and reached in the evening my quarters. I had subsisted for three days on a piece of bread about three inches thick received from the company as my ration. I must say it was *really my* longest Yomkippur fast.

On one of the first days of October while I was on my way, it started to snow. Winter had arrived to remain for the next six to seven months. A Russian winter is for a man of West Europe and who moreover had worked indoors all the time, a very trying and outwearing experience. The terrific cold with mountains of snow, <sup>supplementing</sup> associated with the terrorism of war in the destruction of life. A growing despondency took hold of one, living in a terrifying desolation which the angel of death apparently had spread over the country. It slowly undermined the humanly bearable power of resistance and endurance.

Our commander took care of himself as much as possible under the circumstances. He wore outdoors a good sheep coat and got enough wood to heat his two room lodging. Even his private toilet built near the house had to be covered with thick layers of straw

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like a mantle all around. It was firmly kept together by wire. Two soldiers acted as his servants. William was in care of the living-and sleeping room and the kitchen. August was the coachman and in care of the two horses.

On one gloomy day the captain entered our office with William who carried a simple kerosine lamp filled already with <sup>negot</sup>oil. The captain suggested to hang the lamp on a piece of wire fastened to the ceiling over the working table of the adjutant. It was certainly necessary since the darkness crept in as early as two o'clock in the afternoon, in our room with small windows, shaded by the extension of the straw covered roof. I was ordered to do the job but I had to delay it for the next day since I was ready to walk to the field stations. The next morning I set out for a piece of wire about 2 yard long. I saw the captain taking off in a sledge with August <sup>as his</sup> driver. I strolled from one house to the other, mostly small farmhouses which were scattered in larger distances over the countryside. There was no wire at all, not a single piece and disappointed I returned to our office. When I passed the rear side of our quarters, my eye caught the captain's ingeniously built outdoor toilet which he called with the latin word "locus". It looked like a big straw stack kept together by intertwined wire strings. That was just what I urgently desired to find! In a couple of minutes the length of wire I needed was broken off. When I hurried away, I noticed how the whole straw coat slid slowly to the ground. I fixed the lamp all right and left the office. Shortly after my return in the late afternoon, the commander of the battalion stormed in with all signs of high anger. He told the adjutant that some naughty person had torn down the straw envelope around his most privat locus. He promised a severe punishment, if he would catch that rascal and then left highly annoyed, paying no attention to the burning lamp dangling on the wire right before his nose. All the time I was sitting at my small table like petrified. An hour later William, who was in charge of it, brought for each of us in the office a small ration of marmalade, telling us that the captain was still upset. When he noticed the lamp and the piece of wire he looked, and <sup>now</sup> looked again with all signs of being amazed. He came to me and whispered: "Henry, man, of all things in the world, did you perhaps take the wire from the captain's locus?" I was

flabbergasted but quickly found my posture and I said firmly : William, what on earth makes you believe in such a silly idea that I could have taken the wire from the captain's locus? How would I dare to ruin the captain's locus he esteemed so much? You must be out of your mind!" Finally, he saw his "fault" and was convinced of my "innocence".

It was a bitter-cold day in the beginning of December .As usual, I waited till 5 in the afternoon in the lonesome log house which served as terminal of the railroad from Vilna to Smargon to take orders from the division's staff to be transmitted to our battalion . It snowed without interruption all day long while the roaring storm drove the flakes in dense waves over the plain. I waited patiently beside the phone for my call. One hour elapsed after the other. It seemed as if I waited in vain, in the discomfort of the unheated hut. At 10 p.m. August, the captain's driver, came in a sledge drawn by two horses to pick up the sacks of mail for the battalion, which were deposited there from the passing train. He urged me to return with him. I refused and he left. About  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour later he returned and demanded urgently that I gave up waiting any longer. He said that it is hard even for the horses to make it through the blinding snowstorm. He thought it impossible for me to find my way back on foot. I thanked him and explained that I had strict orders not to leave unless I was told to do so. Therefore I must wait . The good fellow felt sorry for me and drove away. More than an hour later the phone rang and, behold, I had to take the important dictate that the battalion has to be ready in the morning at 6 o'clock for new assignment. I started to grope like blindfolded on my way back. On account of the severe cold it was not advisable to sit down and rest, although my strength threatened to fail. It was a miracle beyond imagination when I finally arrived shortly before 2 a.m. I made my report at once to the commander, whom I had to arouse. There I stood covered over and over with snow which was frozen; but he did not know better than to tell me to transmit the order to the four companies. It is hard to explain how a man could endure the ordeal . However , the consequence of the physical overstrain remained with me and hastened the end of my stay in the Russian campaign.

It was in middle of December 1915. In our recently occupied

Quarter I found a telephone installed in a separate little room all for my-self. There I slept right under the apparatus.

One night around 12 o'clock, I heard a faint sound of the bell as if touched by mistake. I lifted the receiver just to make sure. To my surprise I listened to a conversation between two officers of high rank, belonging to the Board of Health of the 10th army to which our battalion belonged. It was proposed to promote our junior surgeon, Doctor S., to the rank of a surgeon of the battalion. The conversation was concluded in complete agreement in favor of the promotion. That meant that our Doctor advanced from the subordinate rank to the coveted one of an army officer. Now that was a very surprising and interesting news to me.

I knew that there existed a feud between the captain and the doctor. There was even a trial pending before the military court with the doctor as plaintiff on account of an unwarranted insult by the temper of the captain, in presence of the assembled men of the first company to which I belonged. The delay of the trial to a date after the forthcoming promotion must naturally be of great importance for the sake of the doctor. It was just that what I imagined when I met by chance, the next morning, on a lonely path, our surgeon and communicated confidentially to him, and only to him alone did I <sup>so</sup>, the story of his imminent promotion. He was really overwhelmed with joy. He shook my hand and promised he "never will forget what I have done for him". Scarcely one week later our good commander stormed in our office with a sheet of paper in his hand and <sup>he</sup> told his adjutant that by order of the army Dr. S. has been promoted to the surgeon of the battalion. "Now", he continued in a loud voice, "I understand why the trial against me was delayed by the Doctor's request. That man certainly got a hint that his promotion to the rank of officers was at hand. The culprit must be right in this office because only a short time ago there was a secret inquiry about Dr. S. in connection with the intended promotion." The adjutant rose to his feet and solemnly declared that not one word ever leaks out about business affairs in his office. The sergeant rose likewise and affirmed the words of his boss. But the commander was not appeased. He banged his fist on the table and yelled: "I shall not rest till I have found the scoundrel and punished." By playing a trick behind my back that guy helped Dr. S.

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winning the case against me." I was sitting all the time at my small table and wished I could disappear. I made ready to go and rose as the adjutant winked me to leave. Three days later the military court in its trial of the case rebuked severely the conduct of the captain; he got three days confinement to his room. During these days, the good captain quenched his wrath thoroughly in alcohol. When he was sober he decided to take a furlough right after Christmas to avoid the crowd on the train. His request was granted and he departed partly by sledge and mostly by train, towards Stettin. The day after, the doctor in his new dignity as surgeon of the battalion visited us in our office and was told the story of the rage and strange behavior of the captain on the days before the trial. The Doctor only smiled with satisfaction, known only to him and me, without further comment. O, he lived in high spirits with joy thinking of his victory. Later the Doctor told me privately that he thinks it the best for me ~~when~~<sup>that</sup> I would disappear before the captain returned.

In mid January 1916, our surgeon sent word to the adjutant as deputy commander to order me to the infirmary for an examination. The result of it was that body and nerves were in poor condition, aggravated by arthritis. I had lost on weight considerably and was in fact emaciated, unfit for the service in the field. The doctor found it necessary to commit me to the hospital. I had waited too long to complain, he said; now he was glad that he found out. The Doctor stated that in the future I should serve in my home garrison only. He was very concerned about me and drew up an elaborate report to go with me in order to accomplish its purpose.

On the 27th of January 1916 the doctor appeared at our office and arranged with the adjutant my transfer to the hospital in the city of Vilna. It was the day a sledge had to be dispatched to that city to pick up the returning commander. The Doctor told me smiling that it was a very fine opportunity to go now and be away on the day of the captain's return - and out of his interference.

My admission to the hospital was quickly done. The human misery, caused by the hell of war was here horribly demonstrated by the large number of wounded soldiers. War devours its victims without mercy. What a crime! After a short examination, the chief surgeon decided to transfer me with the next transport to a hospital across the German border.

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On the 10th of February 1916 several ~~hundreds~~ of soldiers from ~~the~~ hospital were assembled at the railroad station of Vilna (Lithuania). Whoever was able to do it without help, took his place in one of the many cars which formed the very long train. I was comfortably seated when a sergeant of the medical corps entered my car to revise the labels everybody carried around his neck. Reading my label he said: "You are in the wrong car. This one carries only men with a special disease, contagious too; you must leave. I took my knapsack and walked along the train, looking for another seat. But by now the places were all but taken. Then a tall man, standing in the door of his compartment, watching the scene, hailed and invited me to come in and take the last seat left vacant. His name was William Frech. With him fate itself, as it were, had interfered, because the acquaintance with William was the primary cause which destined later the further course of my life. Late in the night the train made a longer halt at the Russian-German border near a big railroad junction. Then we continued north-west till we reached Pillau, a seaport at an inlet of the Baltic Sea. Nearby was our place of destination, a village named Camstgal. A large auxiliary hospital with many rows of detached, one-story houses was erected on top of a hill, overlooking the Bay. Horse drawn carriages forwarded our baggage and also transported a great part of the wounded or ailing soldiers. Many went on foot; among them my new friend William and I. When the pedestrians arrived, they too, like the others before, were quickly dispatched to their rooms and put to bed. To my dismay I noticed that somebody had taken my knapsack with him. I tried in vain to find it. But since I felt miserable enough, I gave up the search. Now where to find my quarters? By chance, after inquiring for it in several halls, I entered one where William was already in bed. He called me from the other end of the large room as I entered, to come nearer. The good man had asked the sergeant in charge to keep the bed beside him free for his comrade who would be ~~there~~ <sup>convinced</sup> every minute. I was very thankful to him for taking care of me.

In the beginning of our hospitalization we kept mostly silent. But when his painful rheumatism had lessened, and I felt better too, he liked to shorten the time by a good conversation with <sup>me</sup> and we got more and more acquainted. He was a man of about 40 years old and married. He had worked for many years as shipper and packer

in a machinery plant located near the large city of Basel in Switzerland where he was an immigrant. His native country was Germany. He was carried away with other enthusiastic German patriots, and to his greatest regret, as he felt now, he had made the big mistake to leave his secure place in a foreign and neutral country. He had returned to Germany as a volunteer to join the armed forces. He felt very unhappy after he had experienced the sadness of a cruel war. He had fallen in the snares of those patrioteers who urged the other fellows to go, while they remained home. The rendezvous of his German district was at the frontier town Loerrach in south-west Germany, near Basel. There he was assigned to a private home as his quarters, and joined in this way the family of Mr. Meier Beck, a native resident of the town, where he remained till orders arrived to proceed to his military training camp. During his stay of several weeks William got well acquainted with the family of his landlord. *but.*

Mr. Beck was a lithographer in his profession; he had founded his own business in the year 1881. Since his employees were called to the army, he was left alone and busy from the early morning till late in the night to fill his orders. His son Markus who had followed in his father's footsteps was also by now a soldier. There was his daughter Flora about 27 years old who was employed in ne<sup>ar</sup>by Basel as a secretary in an office. She tried to help out in her father's plant and worked late hours after a busy day's work in Basel. A second daughter, Bertl, about nine years younger than her sister, busied herself in the workshop and in her mother's household. William was full of praise and admired all of them. The kindhearted Mrs. Beck harmonized the bonds of the family; besides, she was a good cook which appealed to my friend greatly.

In the beginning of March, <sup>1894</sup>William received a gift package from the Beck's or more exactly from Miss Flora Beck in Loerrach, with the greetings of the whole family. It contained dried <sup>plums</sup>prams. He prepared them in a vessel set on the plate of the heated iron stove in our room. He enjoyed it and insisted that I participate in the feast. William didn't find enough words in all his joy over the <sup>plums</sup>plams to tell me what a marvellous girl Flora was. Judging by the fine taste of the <sup>plums</sup>plams I agreed with him wholeheartedly. The next day, in the afternoon, he prepared himself with



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all seriousness to write a letter of thanks to the thoughtful giver . I did not disturb him; but suddenly he stopped writing and turned toward me with the queer question: "Are you married?" I said: "No, I am not married." I surely wondered what he had in mind. Then he answered, "Flora is the most beautiful and refined girl - - you could not find a better one in all the world, for you as a wife." : " And", he added, " I mean it and she is of the same religion as you." I was startled and I thought that my good friend turning to a "shatchen" must be in an exceptionally good mood and liked to cheer me up in these monotonous days. I could not help laughing heartily for the first time since I went to war. But he remained serious and in an afterthought he said: "There is a younger daughter of Mr. Beck. Yet, I never would recommend her for you because there is only Flora who matches with you to the finest perfection." He alluded slightly in his letter to his "plot", and then he urged me to write a few words when he had finished. I did as I was asked to do. That was the beginning of a correspondence which lasted about two years till we met , Purim 1918, and got personally acquainted. Indeed, so well, that love took roots in our hearts. On <sup>the</sup> first of April 1916 William was released as recovered from his sickness. We parted with his promise that he would be in touch with the Beck family, where I could hear about him. I assumed that he returned to his designated garrison in Germany where he died rather suddenly, Neither the Beck's nor I saw or heard of him again.

On my request, my Father made an application which I had prepared for him, to transfer me for special treatment to a hospital of my hometown Stettin. That was granted. I left on the 14 th of April 1916 Camstgal and arrived the next day in Stettin. The hospital was in the midst of a large park about 1½ miles from the city. I had all cause to be very pleased with the change with my surroundings and made good strides in my recovery. The mutual visits with my parents were pleasant and beneficial. On the 25 th of July I was released from the hospital and returned to ~~the~~ home garrison of my regiment in Kolberg at the Baltic Sea. I was first attached to a special company with an easy service, before a definite assignment was made. A few weeks after my arrival I was commanded as clerk to the office of the company. My immediate superior was a sergeant-major. The company was under the command

of a captain. Both were men of fine character. In a short time I noticed to my joy that both of them appreciated my ability and the accuracy of my work. Many favors were bestowed on me. I also got the permission to live in a rented room in the city.

In Spring 1918, I received my first furlough of two weeks and decided to pay a visit to my lovely correspondent in Loerrach. I lodged in a hotel room for the three days of my stay. During the day, Flora was at work in Basel - to my regret. I got acquainted with her parents and her sister and got a glimpse of the plant, the city and surroundings. When the furlough came to an end, Florli had left with me an inextinguishable impression. I fell in love with her charming manners, her vivid spirit, her kindness, her attractive figure, and her lovely face. My friend William was right after all. Flora was indeed a perfect match, to my delight. I felt much flattered and exalted when I noticed that her sentiments were favorable to me, although she restrained from confessing it. I passed the remainder of my furlough with my parents in Stettin. Then I returned to Kolberg and resumed my job at the company.

The German prospect to end the war victoriously had faded since 1917 more and more. The allied forces against Germany, greatly augmented by the entry of America in the war, showed their superiority unmistakably on the battle field as well as on the economical home front. The armistice in the East with its harsh conditions against Russia, <sup>and</sup> maimed by the rebellion of the troops, brought little relief for the Germans. War fatigue and restlessness at home and at the front, in view of a lost war, led finally to a revolt within the navy and the army, spreading over the whole country of Germany. The armistice on the 11th of November 1918 concluded the war. It had left painful scars on mind and heart of the millions returning to civil life. For four years a terrible war had let loose the horrors of hell on earth. Men and all things around him had changed. Germany's power was crushed militarily and economically. The Emperor of Germany was dethroned. The Republic of Germany in her woeful pains rose on shaky feet. The struggle for a new form of life was ruthless in any respect. The unscrupulous eagerness of men to gain riches without effort was incited by the scarcity of merchandise of any kind. The soldiers were in a hurry to go home to attend to their business or to get their old jobs back.

accordant with <sup>the</sup> armistice terms, the demobilization had to be put through without delay, ~~causing through precipitation more distress.~~ Following the call for experienced men to do the job of the demobilization, I volunteered for one year as a civilian. Many others did the same, but pretty soon they deserted the assumed task because the payment was only a modest one. I was nominated as chief clerk and handled especially the claims of war indemnification. A fine testimony of a job well done was handed to me by the Administration, on the termination of my work.

On the first of October 1919 I returned home to Stettin. My brother was already home, working at his pre-war place. His trade was the wholesale manufacturing of men's suits. The city of Stettin was very suitable for this kind of work because hundreds of tailors worked as independently in their workshops at home, taking the orders from the wholesale trade. Moritz intended to start this kind of business on his own risk. I was earnestly urged by my Parents to join with him as a partner. This brought me in a sharp conflict as well with myself as with my Parents. Moritz kept obviously neutral on the issue. The parental offer was very alluring since father was a well-to-do merchant, and it was only in the interest of all of us to make good use of his money to save it from the inflation which was inevitable after a lost war and in a state functioning in a political and economical chaos. Whether the partnership with my brother would be to our mutual satisfaction was an open question. I had left my parent's house eleven years ago, and during the years the bonds of brotherly love had lost, to my greatest regret, their binding strength. Moreover domestic tranquility within the family was by no means a given fact. However, one thing was clear: starting a business of my own with no substantial funds must be much more strenuous than a start in the secure shelter with my father's means and my brother's experience. But despite all reflections, persuasion, and entreaty, I decided to start an enterprise of my own and to do it rather the hard way. My decision greatly discomfited my Parents, and my refusal to remain in Stettin was never completely forgotten nor forgiven.

In the first days of November 1919, while a railroad strike hampered much my journey, I left by train for South Germany. I had chosen the industrial city of Pforzheim well located for commerce

with traffic to all directions. After arrival, I rented a furnished room uptown and business premises downtown. My enterprise proved a success from the start since the ~~economy was not too strong~~ <sup>upward</sup> ~~upward~~ <sup>extended</sup>. I was my own buying agent and salesman in textiles. I also did the office work as bookkeeper, correspondent and shipper. Since the distance to Loerrach was only a few hours by train, I visited my sweetheart now and then. On a meeting towards the end of the year, Florli suggested that I should consider the proposition to take over her Father's printing plant, founded 1881. A couple of years before the war, his son, Markus, with much experience, had added to his Father's business of lithography, a printing plant. However the war interrupted his work. He was drafted to the army and died in November 1917 as a victim of the war. At the end of 1919 the business was slow. The house at the front of the street, Teichstr.: 36 was dilapidated. The flat on the second floor was rented. On the ground floor was the office and the paper cutting room. In the rear of the small and long stretched area was a two story building erected by Mr. Beck about 1900. On the ground floor was the printing plant. The upper floor, with completed attics above, served as the lodging of the family. There was Mr. and Mrs. Beck, the two daughters and the sister of Mr. Beck, our aunt Mary. She was paralysed, but nevertheless was busy as a dressmaker. Her modest and agreeable personality won easily my friendship. The dwindling lithography was done by Mr. Beck in a shabby shack build, along the right wall between front and rear building. Two professional men worked in the printing plant; its equipment had to be replenished to bring it up to date and to compete with the others. Behind the house was a small garden.

I considered that I had only started with my own business, and here was the alluring task to continue, to develop, and to enlarge the printing shop to a prosperous enterprise. The lithography had to be abandoned as <sup>unprofitable</sup> ~~obsolete~~ on the commercial market. With the trust in my ability as well as in the capacity of Florli and with the hope of a little personal luck, I decided to take up the challenge.

On the first of Februar 1920 I moved to Loerrach, rented a room near the shop, while I was a border with the Beck's family. In the previous year Florli had bought with her personal savings a

three story apartment house with four apartments; one on the first floor, two on the third floor and one on the whole second floor. The building was in good condition and was situated at the Spitalstrasse #46, <sup>not far from</sup> near the business. The apartments were rented at modest prices and kept that way through the years to come by the City ordinances governing lodgings after the war which were scarce to the utmost. There was only an exception to the apartment of the former owner of the house now living on the second floor. But he also had a protective clause for his apartment. If the other tenants did not like to move one could not give him notice to vacate his apartment. On the house was a small mortgage kept by the seller of the house.

In the second week of my arrival in Loerrach I received the sad news that my sister had died after a short illness. She lived still in Berlin when the influenza or flu as it was commonly called put her in the hospital. The flu had spread all over Europe and taken a toll of many thousands, preferably among the younger people. I met for the funeral with my Father and Brother in Berlin. The time was set at 11 a.m. at the chapel of the cemetery. Our grief was very great over the unexpected loss; my Sister was only 32 years old. We arrived a quarter before 11 and paused at the little house of the caretaker near the entrance. My Father had brought along a black silk hat with a built-in mechanical device. He had preferred to take this tophat because it could be pressed down and carried in a small flat box. This opera or crush hat was not used anymore since many years. For Shabbath and Yomtov Father wore his regular silk hat. My Father gave his crush-hat a slight clap against his hand which is usually sufficient for the inner springs to straighten out. My Father tried it again and again <sup>but it did not straighten</sup> more strongly but it did not work. The time elapsed quickly and Father grew impatient while we stood there and didn't know what to do. Then Father tried it with despair so to say, for a last time. He struck the brim of the hat hard against the window sill and behold the hat opened suddenly and was by the vibration of the springs whirled high up in the air. We three together gazed in strange astonishment. For a moment it looked as if the hat would land on the roof of the one story building. But since the weather was calm, the hat returned and I grasped it in my stretched arms. In all our mourning my Brother and I couldn't

help but bursting nearly with laughter. What a comedy in a tragical situation. The burial ceremony was completed by a Rabbi in solemn dignity. Since it was Friday, we took without delay the next train to Stettin. The shivah sitting which was not obligatory for us was shortened to three days. Then I returned to Loerrach. While I was away, Mrs. Beck was taken to the hospital in Basel with a severe illness from which she had suffered since a longer time. The motherly love for her little good Florli was boundless; she was greatly concerned about her well being in the future. It was of greatest joy for her when I told her on my visit that we had decided to announce publicly our engagement for Sunday the 29 th of February 1920. Some weeks later, on the pre-eve of the second day of Pesach, the beloved Mother closed her eyes for ever. Deeply mourned by her family, relatives and the congregation, she was laid to rest in the cemetery of Loerrach.

It was, as it could be expected, a <sup>quite</sup> difficult for me to start in a complete unknown trade. Much effort and patience was necessary to overcome the obstacles of organizing the business from within and without. That I had to acquaint myself with the technique of the trade was self-evident. But it was not my aim to replace a worker in the shop. If the business should flourish, I had to employ my training as a merchant. My task was to make contact with <sup>for</sup> respective customers, especially with the industry. Above all, I had to <sup>supervise</sup> ~~supervise~~ the production in the shop to the satisfaction of my clientele. I also was my own bookkeeper. Florli who had given up her job in Basel was of course of the most valuable service to me, both in the office and in handling much of the sidework, which <sup>for instance</sup> ~~belonged~~ to the bookbinding department. The swiftness of her little fingers was astonishing. Slowly the business was put <sup>on</sup> a new effective base. The lithographer as the pastmaster was replaced by the new printerboss.

Bertl had made up her mind to ~~move~~ <sup>move</sup> to Switzerland where she worked in an agreeable position in the City of Zuerich where <sup>for some time</sup> ~~she met~~ with many good friends of Loerrach. Bertl was a girl who could easily meet all requirements in life.

The time had come, to make new arrangements for better working conditions. The plan was to convert the living quarters on the second floor above the printing shop to workrooms for cutting, staple setting, perforating, punching, creasing, shipping, etc. . The former kitchen would be my office. The small room separated from the livingroom

was just right to store our paper stockpile. Although Mr. Beck was  
 the owner of the premises, Teich-Strasse 36, and Florli owned the  
 house Spitalstr. 46, there was nearly no possibility to oust a tenant  
 without giving him new <sup>adequate</sup> living quarters which he liked, or he <sup>could</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>possibly</sup> ~~would~~  
<sup>have</sup> not moved. The rights of the owner in this respect was strictly  
 curtailed by the postwar laws, <sup>as pointed out before</sup>. But the urgent  
 necessity to claim possession, was there for us by two reasons:  
 first to organize purposefully the business for a better output and  
 service; secondly to make an earnest attempt to gain an apartment  
 in Florli's building, if we ever <sup>would be able</sup> wanted to get married. We were now  
 one year <sup>officially</sup> engaged, and without finding lodgings, we <sup>be continued to</sup> ~~would wait~~ without an  
 end. Finally I contrived a clever plan. To achieve our purpose, five  
 families with their households had to be moved. (#1) Father Beck  
 had to give up the flat on the second floor and move upstairs, where  
 2 rooms with bath were available for him. He was very generous and  
 kind to do so and give us a helping hand to build up our <sup>level of</sup> ~~existence~~  
 The first floor of dwelling house on the front street which had  
 served as office and cutting room, would be <sup>changed</sup> ~~tendered~~ to an apartment  
 and (#2) the tenant of the second floor had to move down. Then the  
 whole second floor had to be newly decorated and calculated to play  
 the leading part in the whole scheme. (#3) The tenant on the ground-  
 floor of the Spitalstr. had to move out of the house. But first, I  
 had to offer him an other apartment equal to his <sup>in good</sup> ~~lodging~~. The apt.  
 second floor Teichst. was certainly not of the same quality. I had  
 to find one. I risked an add in the local newspaper and promised  
 to let my apt. for six months free of rent if somebody could offer  
 me in exchange his own apt. provided that it was in good condition.  
 I also promised all the participants in the moving game, to pay the  
 cost of it. From the many offers I got, only one complied with my  
 request for an apt. in fair condition. (#4) The tenant who accepted  
 my offer was a widow with one son. She had a quarrel with her  
 landlord and wanted to move and therefore <sup>was ready for the move</sup> ~~had to be content with the~~  
 apt. I offered. The main point for me was that her apt. could stand  
 the comparison with that of the Spitalst.. Even then it needed all  
 the art of persuasion to convince the tenant of the Spitalst. that  
 he now has to move on the same day his newly designated apt. was  
 vacated. (#5) The tenant of the flat on the second floor Spitalst.,  
 the former owner, was obliged as stipulated by Florli's contract

to move to the apt. on the groundfloor. Finally the coveted flat with five rooms on the second floor was vacant and could be occupied as our new home. The whole moving operation had virtually to be done on the same day. It was, to our own astonishment, accomplished as a remarkable deed under the circumstances of our time.

In view of our forthcoming marriage, an arrangement had to be made by Father Beck with his heirs at law to avoid later possible litigations. There was his Son, Professor Dr. Ernst Beck, married and well established. He made no claims on the ~~residue~~<sup>estate</sup> of his Father. A legal contract that followed our own outline was drawn up by the Notary to set forth the claims of my Father-in-law and his Sister Marie, as well as those of his two daughters. Mr Beck was made a silent partner of the business who was entitled to 20% of the income, Lodging and boarding free for him and his Sister. An expert was called to appraise the printing plant and the value of the premises to be divided between the two Sisters. Bertl was to be paid off at once, <sup>in</sup>evtl. on the day of her contemplated marriage. The encumbrance ~~for~~ a young couple with a business that had to be much more developed, was surely heavy. But it is better to know before the start who is who and what is what, than later a lifelong quarrel. From the legal standpoint, I myself owned nothing. I was just the manager of the business and the husband of dear Florlichen.

Finally the wedding day we were longing for since more than one year, was set for Tuesday the 29th of March 1921. In the forenoon was the civil ceremony performed at the City-hall. My Father-in-law, his Son Ernst and my Father, who had arrived from Stettin, were the witnesses. In the afternoon at 3 o'clock, Rabbi Cohn from Basel performed the ritual ceremony in the nicely decorated living room of our flat in the Spitalst. at the presence of the assembly of the wedding guests. The Rabbi said in his speech, we should go through life with love and appreciation, like a betrothed couple. We endeavored to follow his advice. I had all reason to consider myself a happy groom when I looked at my bride. Florli appeared in her made to order white wedding dress exceedingly gorgeous, proud and lucky like a Queen. Her black hair around her rosy face and well proportioned figure united with a quick and superior mind, & her broad education made her a charming sweetheart. This acknowledgment for my part, on our wedding day, ~~consorted~~<sup>united</sup> nicely with the sentence

united  
of the day



of our Rabbi. An elaborate dinner concluded the festive day. Our apartment was beautiful; the rooms were newly decorated; the furnitures of the living and sleeping rooms were made to order of precious wood. All paid in full by dear Florlichen.

On the ~~next~~ day after our wedding I was regretfully back at the business "as usual". We had to wait five <sup>more</sup> years ~~more~~ for our first vacation <sup>where we were</sup> to be finally alone for one week, in the beauty of the Berner mountains in Switzerland. Both of us surely needed the time ~~out to~~ <sup>relax</sup> because big events had occurred in the economics and politics <sup>and</sup> and hard work had filled the time during those years, since we started in our adventure and since we had sealed by mutual vows our communion of ~~life~~.

The ruin of the German currency by inflation was of devastating consequences for the whole country. To consider money as a value, was a delusion because it melted away under our hands. The prices climbed higher and higher and the larger the figures, the poorer one became. At the end millions of Mark were needed what ten or hundred would have normally bought. It became the trend of the time to get rid of the money as fast as <sup>it came in</sup> possible. The businessman exchanged it into merchandise, the debtor paid his mortgage back, the tenant paid his low rent which could not be raised, with the money in the value of a slice of bread. The multiplier for the "basic wages" announced weekly took many <sup>often</sup> times all the money the employer had received during the week for all the work done. There was little profit left. While the inflation was still raging we paid the mortgage back on Florli's house and to Bertl her parental inheritance. We urged her to ~~buy~~ <sup>buy</sup> furniture for the money to save the value. But Bertl wouldn't listen to us. It was a desperate situation and the business suffered greatly. To pay the money, it had first to be earned by the millions, and that was the hardest part of it. The people of the neighbourly Switzerland flocked across the border and bought merchandise or even houses for easy speculation or whatever was of value to them, and further <sup>more</sup> kept themselves well fed with little money, in accordance with the "high value" of the Swiss franc. It was therefore easy to have them as customers. They were shrewd and would pay the pre-calculated price on the day the order was delivered and then - with German money. The shrinkage of the German money was their extra profit. To rely on such a clientele was imprudent; they would vanish on the day the inflation had coursed itself to death.



But love alone was not enough there must be a dowry also. Bertl's share paid to her had vanished during the inflation. In order not to endanger the forthcoming marriage, Florli and I had no other choice but to pay her parental inheritance a second time: That meant that Florli had to renounce her part of it completely. There was not enough money at hand. Only: the year before we had paid for the second time to the former owner of Florli's house the balance of the mortgage: but this time with 100% re-evaluation although the law asked only for up to 30% of the original amount. Now we had to borrow the money and pay high interest. Our good reputation in the city prompted us to this. The whole transaction came dangerously near to an economical suicide.

In the spring of the next year, 1926, my father-in-law fell ill. An operation at the hospital brought no relief. On the third of June 1926 he left this world which had endowed him with hard work and a struggle to win against many odds. But he had not lived in vain. He had fought and he had won. He had lived to see his family and his work thriving. As inscription on his tombstone I selected from Psalm 116 the seventh vers: Return, O, my soul, to thy rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with thee.

After his death the rooms in the attic were added to the factory in order to avoid seizure for private tenancy. We needed them for working and storage rooms.

Several changes and renewals, spread over the years were induced to improve the income of the business. The ground floor was enlarged about a third of its size by using a part of the backyard. Two modern fast running automatic printing presses and several

auxiliary machines were added. The old lithography shack was demolished and replaced by a paper storage building, the porch on the second floor <sup>built</sup> ~~finished~~ as cutting room. A lift was installed to facilitate the transport<sup>of</sup> <sup>my</sup> goods between up- and down-stairs. I learned to drive and bought an auto to <sup>facilitate</sup> ~~quicken~~ the visits to my customers. <sup>for it</sup> In the ~~house~~ <sup>Spitalst.</sup> was put in a canalization <sup>as in most</sup> one of ~~few~~ <sup>new</sup> in the whole street, in order to have toilets with water-flushing; that was done for all apartments in the house. <sup>then</sup> A bathroom, fitted with running hot and cold water was <sup>added</sup> ~~installed~~ on our flat. In the backyard a garage for my car was set up. A rotating hot water system was made to order for us, to heat our entire flat from one source in the hall.

A novelty was introduced already during the life time of my Father-in-law in the conduct of the business. I had decided to close the plant on the Shabbat day completely. "How can you do this when the rival firms are working?" I was often asked. But I did, and it proved to be a blessing. The employees just worked during the week a little longer and didn't lose one penny. We all had a fine "Oneg Shabbat". I for my part could visit undisturbed the synagogue, and in the afternoon the whole family took a leisurely stroll. During the long summer vacation of the Cantor <sup>as the Cantor left</sup> I functioned in his stead and read even the whole sidre out of the Torah.

In the first days of August, 1931, on Friday-eve while I made ready for the shabbat servise, our dear Aunt prepared herself to leave us for ever. She succumbed to a repeated stroke. -In February we all had joyfully celebrated her 80 th birthday. She was mourned by all who had known her; she had dedicated her life to the service of others despite being handicapped. She was a pious person. As the epitaph for her was chosen: "Pray and work" and that was Marie Beck.

At the end of December of nearly each year I used to visit my parents in Stettin, taking the children with me. It was a pleasure to travel with them; they behaved just pleasantly. My parents enjoyed our visit, more and more, although in the first years they were not quite reconciled with my departure for Loerrach. But by the time their feelings were softened under the lucky circumstances that the business my brother had started grew most prosperously.

Each year, in May or June, the printing plant was closed <sup>in order to</sup> ~~to give~~ everybody a fine vacation for one week. The employees got another week in the course of the year. Florli and I took off to the Black

Forest and enjoyed it immensely to be alone for rest and recreation in the splendor of Nature . The children remained home in good care with aunt Marie and a reliable house-maid.

The business grew more and more to our content and satisfaction. We all were healthy and so to say <sup>almost</sup> wealthy. The children developed to our heart's desire, <sup>in fact</sup> at the best Parents could hope for. Life ahead of us seemed to be an easy and happy one. But unfortunately it was not . Fate had turned it just the other way around . We were approaching the fateful year 1933.

The post-war years of the first world war 1914 - 1918 brought no peace neither for Germany nor for the nations which had participated in the war. Germany, earmarked as the instigator of the war, was burdened with terrifying restitutions dictated in the peace treaties of 1919 by hate rather than by the desire to heal the wounds the war had inflicted on the States of Europe. England that had fought mainly to eliminate Germany as a strong competitor on the world market could not regain her former position. The value of her currency dwindled; her colonial empire upon which was based her strength throughout the world fell apart. The so called "Balfour declaration " by England of 1917, calling for the establishment of a National home for the Jews, was primarily a political move to gain a foothold in the near East. The Arabs with their oil sources were to them of dominant importance. From 1920 - 1948 England, as mandatory of the League of Nations, exercised strongly her authoritative power over Palestine in the rotten way of an ambiguous policy disavowing her declaration in favor of the Arabs. France was pushed by the war from her respected position among the nations and tried in vain to regain her political and economical health and strength within and outside her borders. The League of Nations founded 1919 with seat in Geneva (Switzerland) degenerated quickly, drowned in a pool of hate and jealousy among themselves, and ended up as a farce to the world. The United States of America, ahead on her way to take the first place among the Nations, recoiled before her task to be the impartial arbitrator and guarantor of peace.

The year 1919 saw Germany in a political and economical state of chaos. Germany was proclaimed as a Republic after abdication of the Emperor, and reigned by members of the former "Social Democratic Party" which had grown to the strongest party in the former Imperial

Diet or Reichstag. They had fought for this goal since 30 years. But they were ill prepared and advised to use their power to take root and keep the reign firmly in strong hands. In 1925 a pensioned marshal, a strategist of the imperial army during the war, was elected as President of the German Republic and reelected 1932. Under his leadership the influential pre-war parties in Germany : the industrialists , the great landowners , the feudal lords , and the army officers as the traditional advocates of militarism, they all came out of their hiding places and made their undesirable influence noticeable in the newly formed National party as the reactionary wing in the Parliament. The Democrats were the losers and could not regain the leadership. More than 30 political parties which had been formed embittered mutually their life in a ruthless struggle to gain influence within the Nation.

Among them was a coalition founded 1919 in Munich (Bavaria) and since 1921 directed by a former immigrant from Austria who was during the war a soldier in the German army. The party was known by the name "National-Socialist German workers ' party. (National-sozialistische Deutsche Arbeiter-Partei) shortened to NSDAP or commonly called the "Nazis". The insidious agitation of the Nazis was like a volcano roaring under the surface of the Republic of Germany. If it should erupt in due course the destructive power could crack the very fundamentals on which the social, political, economical , and judicial order rested as well as the religious, ethical and moral conduct of mankind. A horrible avalanche of hatred against the Jews was poured over the German population to stir up the meanest instincts in man. The Jew was declared to be the enemy of the country and moreover it was a race that had to be eliminated all over Europe, even the world. Was this man a twaddler or the megaphone of the populace or just an insane rable rouser? To find the answer one would have to add more sordid attributes to analyse this creature which was destined to personify the satan on earth. In the role of a self-styled leader or still better as the "furious maniac " he succeeded to convert large parts of the German people into brutal beasts like himself. There was nothing new in the system to drag the Jews as scapegoats to the slaughterhouse. Appalling was the tremendous scale in that it was carried through without mercy, to the shame of mankind. What did the world care since it was "only" the

Jew. The history of the Jews living as scattered minorities in a Christian surroundings tells of blood caused by murder, of rivers of tears caused by robbery and expulsion from their homelands, and through mental and bodily torture.

As far as the Nazis were concerned the Jew must be destroyed because the Jew with his Bible was a stumbling block for the Nazi's mentality to reach their goal : to dominate the world by sheer force of brutality. The Jew was doomed to disaster. The Jewish religious conception of life, his intoxicating enthusiasm for the cause of humanity, equality and justice for all, his exalted belief ( though deceptive as it was ) in his warranted rights as integrated citizen, all that was thoroughly shattered . His cosmopolitan philosophy of peace and brotherhood in the world burned up like dry straw before his eyes. The Jew has to come to terms with his life as a Jew to avoid the fatal fangs of doubt and desperation which drove many of them to commit suicide rather than to strengthen themselves to recover the lost meaning of the true preciousness of Judaism.

It is never too late to start. In the year 1924 when I was 34 years old I began to search for the ancient Jewish faith which has given strength and courage to the persecuted Jews throughout the ages. My lack of knowledge as a Jew was a most lamentable one. I was like a sleepwalker in danger to perish. I had to arouse myself to become conscious of being distinct as a Jew from the rottenness and from the moral decay of German society which kept their conscience silent in face of the rising Nazi organization. Early in the morning I rose to my task to discern the essence of Judaism by studying the Hebrew language , the history and the supplementary literature. It became the anchorage of my future life.

In the year 1932 the Nazi party had won a great number of seats in the parliament and was by now the second strongest party in the assembly. On the 30 th of January 1933 the President of the German Republic appointed the furious maniac of the Nazi party, foaming with rage, as chancellor of Germany. After the death of the President in August 1934 the "furious" succeeded him. He combined in his wretched person the total sum of the State's power as the absolute dictator in a totalitarian state. He controlled as a dogged tyrant the army and every single phase of activity and private life of the German

Remarks to the following pages ,42- 50  
Read them or leave them alone

In the pages 42 - to 50 a short review of the german history is presented to the conscious reader. It shows the poisonous influence on the human mind that led under the Nazi regime to the most cruel method of annihilation of nearly all of European Jewry. The result of a deep - rooted hate. *(Earlier: The fall of the Holy Shire!)*

Please consult the history books of the 19 - and 20 century written after the Nazi-time and also the book "Anthology ( Sammlung or collection ) of "Holocaust Literature " You find it in my library.

Do not fail to notice the gruesome discoloring of human behavior all over the world after the terrible years of 1933-1945.



population aided by the members of the Nazi cabinet, by a firmly organized party and by the SS-schutzstaffel that means a protective echelon which is to be defined as a special organization with criminal characteristics. Members of the "Secret Police" known as the Gestapo acted as hounds to hunt up persons of non-conformity. The Jews were openly singled out for merciless destruction. It became the basic demand of this bestial Nazi-government. About 95% of the Germans had voted for the "furious maniac"; their joy with him was limitless. The party members marched through the streets by day and by night shouting and cursing the Jews demanding their blood; it is good when the Jewish blood flows from our blades. Furious give the command and we shall follow. Hasten the days of the Jews. Clean the country of the Jews. Kill them as parasites and as the source of all misfortune in Germany. Thus prepared Germany herself to put on the stage the tragedy of an unprecedented disaster in the Jewish history. The furious had declared it as an internal affair of Germany and the World by and large looked obediently away.

Many times one is asked how could this great calamity, made by men insane and rotten to the core, happen in Germany with a fine reputation and admired civilization? As an answer I would recommend to read the book by William L. Shirer "The rise and fall of the 3rd Reich." A history of Nazi-Germany. To read this book is of great value to understand the characteristics and the politics in the years 1933 - 1945. Reading this book and the special ones recording the Nazi's barbaric atrocities one has to assume that the Nazis had made a covenant with the devil personified by the furious-maniac: he led them to their amusement to high success and finally they perished in the glowing hell. Everything promised for the good of a greater Germany turned to disaster. But the annihilation of the Jews was nearly complete and carried through in a most horrible manner. *6 millions Jews perished in the holocaust.*

To understand this macabre, i.e. gruesomely imaginative, dance of devils on earth, here called Nazis of the 20th century, we have to consult the history of the Jews since the rise of Christianity.

A proverb tells us that those who do not remember the past are condemned to re-live it. One shudders, learning from history about the innumerable cruel and inhuman persecutions through centuries, with the blessings of the jubilant Christians, to "honor and embellish" their religion. The rulers of the nations in strong

*see history of the Jews in Spain, Italy, Greece etc.*

from here  
to  
1935  
1945

concert with those who had designated themselves as deputies of heaven exercised their power over man using the outcast Jew as medium in times of war and peace and never mind robbery and murder if it concerned "only" the Jews. It was for the good of state and church to fill the ever so often empty treasury. They too danced ~~in~~ in their churches and palaces, in the streets and market places. They too were filthy and stingy and jealous in their covetousness, as did their successors the Nazis.

With the French revolution around the end of the 18 th century a new concept about humanity seemed to dawn - - even for the Jews. But it was a short lived dream. The reactionaries of state and church, in true compaignship, gained back after the so called war of liberation, 1812-1815, against France, enough power to betray the people in their hope ~~for~~ in a new age of enlightenment, in liberty of the mind, of equality and brotherhood among men. The uprising for the same ideals between 1830 - 1850 in Germany, France, Austria, was abortive. Countries like Russia, Rumania ,Bulgaria had not even attempted to shake off the chains of State and Church. Nevertheless the regents of the united German states had to yield in slow movements to the mental upheaval of the nation. To the Jews were given, with the utmost reluctance, the concession to be equals among the German citizens. An odious degradation was thus removed by the emancipation of the German Jewry in the second half of the 19th century. But by no means did the Christian church follow suit. The tormenting inquisition of the catholic church was finally abolished 1834. But the relentless fight against liberty of conscience continued by holding a firm grip on the catholic confessors. The Church Christianity never ceased to defame the Jews as heretics and "Christ-killers."

In spite of all this the Jews lived up like flowers in a green house to the highest expectation, in commerce , science, socialism, politics, in philan<sup>thropic</sup> and many other undertakings, for the benefit of Jews and non-Jews alike, But anti-semitism was a deep rooted evil. Could some paper work as the ordinances of emancipation really eradicate the evils pent-up since centuries in heart and mind of man? Who did care for the time being? German Jewry was exalting about their civic rights like good patriots of their country - - however precarious it was in the discernment of experience and reason.

It is an old legal maxim that the instigator is just as much



guilty as the perpetrator. To come to a fair understanding of Nazi-terrorism we have to search for the evil elements that animated the Christian world and activated the horror during the short-lived but immensely gruesome period of time of Nazism. We can not evade the task to consider in summary the spiritual and secular forces that preceded nazism and formed its mentality.

The clergy of Christianity in the past centuries combined in a splendidly deceptive manner aristocracy with the utmost of cruelty in human society towards the Jews. Two colossal contrasts indeed if you look from the outside at the magnificent cathedrals and if you penetrate into the interior with the symbols of religion. Both are overwhelming and crushing in their aspects. Power, splendor, love and limitless hate. The nucleus of the church's might is discernible in the authority that exercises a totalitarian influence upon the confessors and arouses their hate and rage against those they declare to be their enemies. The first on their list has been of old and today the Jew. Time does not mitigate their fury which falls back frequently and easily hundreds of years to the base level of slander and persecution, to do honor to the dogmas of their religion -- inexorably and irrevocably. Time and again the Christian religions have proved to be the dominant factor in the life of European nations responsible for unspeakably lamentable events which have befallen the Jews throughout the generations.

Let us pause here and recall the historical events in the last century before the appearance of the Nazi-epoch.

It was an illusion that Europe during the 19th century could rise victoriously and tear asunder the evil power of servility. During the years 1820 - 1860 two opposite forces clashed in a bitter fight: The rulers of the nations, together with the clergy as their companions, against a number of illustrious men as speakers and fighters for the people, to bring forth the thoughts of spiritual enlightenment and liberalism. The Jews naturally played a conspicuous role in the significant fight against the united reactionary powers. However, the absolutism of the rulers of State and Church remained strong enough to suppress that what quickly was branded as machinations of the Jews. The best result in obscuring the truth could always be achieved by abusing the Jews. The old restrictions against them were re-established, new ghettos formed, the yellow badge re-introduced. And as it was in Germany, thus it was in other European

countries. In Austria and in Italy the miserable special Jew laws of time past were restored and Jews forced back to the ghettos. In Italy for example they were erected along the Tiber as it has been many centuries. In France, the clergy endeavored to remove every vestige of the Nation's "infidelity". Censorship and inquisition like in Italy were re-established. Every wretched device was used to convert the Jews to Christianity. It is obvious that Spain suited herself heartily to the demands of the 'holy church'. The destructive power of slanderous persecution of the Jews was maintained unrestrictedly by the catholic clergy, dismally entangled in their "holy tenets".

In Germany the evolution developed into rebellion and revolution in the years between 1840 - 1860. Although these movements of unrest among the people were broken up and forced drastically into silence, the mind of man marched forward in its search <sup>for</sup> dignity, equality and justice for all. Gnashing their teeth, the reactionaries of Church and State had to yield to the time honored demands. Amidst the turmoil of ups and downs, the emancipation of the Jews in Germany and in other States of Western Europe was accredited between 1865 to 1870. Many a Christian has written in the battle his name in the "golden book" of mankind. However, the mass of the people, the educated as well as the illiterate ~~ones~~, remained thoroughly impregnated with hatred against the Jews. It worked like a spell over the Christian mind emanating from the centuries old infamous doctrine about the Jews as Christ-killers, ref. to Gospel of Matthew 27, 24/25. In this respect the infallibility of the Christian Church, Catholic and Protestant alike, as instigators of wholesale crime of unimaginable atrocities was proven thousands of times throughout the generations, in Jewish history.

In the years between 1870 - 1920 anti-semitism took anew advantage <sup>in</sup> the upheaval in the changing pattern of life in a state that had to deal with new conceptions in economical, social and political affairs. The Jews took <sup>up</sup> their hard won place in Germany, in the fight for the betterment of the life of the exploited ones, of the workers in the factories and on the farm. The Jew became their friend and ally in the ~~in the~~ social demands to raise the worker's standard of living. Laws of the People's behalf were introduced and won to secure social security, old age pensions

medical care , invalidity-indemnification and other benefits . The workers were organized and established for their own good in trade unions. The Jews stood in the first ranks and did not fail to help the socially oppressed classes. The Jews attracted by their activities the hate of the industrialists, the big landowners, the military and other right wing parties. But the beneficiaries forgot ungratefully "their" Jews.

The real clash occurred in Germany when the separation of State and Church was proposed in the Diet (Reichstag) ~~causing~~ the so-called "Kulturkampf", the fight for the right to educate the youth. The education of the Catholic youth was considered as the sole domain of the Church. The Jews were on the side of those party members in the Parliament who wished to abrogate the predominance of the Churches. It was cause enough for the clergy under the leadership of the Vatican to burst into an uncontrollable rage against all Jews. Without any restraint anti-Jewish diatribes all over the world as an all-out effort to revoke the emancipation of the Jews were circulated.

At the 'proper' time, just before Christmas 1872, the holiday of love, and peace on earth, the Pope took his place, as his predecessors had done on many occasions, as the leader general in the campaign of baiting against the Jews. He delivered his vehement address before the dignitaries of the Curia, the papal court. A few months later the pope deemed it necessary to elaborate on his first attack in an other address taking off the mask that had slightly shielded his dignity and unleashed his unrestrained hate against the Jews and branded all of them as enemies of Christ and Christianity. He further pointed out the Jews for scorn and persecution as the source of all misdeeds.

His words found a tremendous acclamation among the Catholics in the world. A sordid defiance against the Jews was nourished within the believers like a built-in gadget to be set in motion by brutal instincts and by the lust for bestial acts when deemed necessary for any kind of imaginary cause. Germany, they maintained, was in danger of falling a helpless prey to the Jews.

Roused by the base accusations of clergy and vatican itself, reinforced by the Protestants, anti-semitism became a burning national problem. Beginning 1878 German's anti-Jewish hostility ascends to the political stage. Religion and race were now combined



as weapons against the Jews. Yet, although the emphasis was put upon the race as a dangerous element in the nation, the religion of the Jews was also viciously criticized. The malicious aggression persisted obstinately and dominated all thoughts, minds, and opinions for nearly 30 years. In fact, it never was completely extinguished again.

During the long years of an intense and obstinate campaign not only the hard-won rights as citizens were jeopardized but the good will of living in peace with each other was also incorrigibly damaged. The cleavage could scarcely be bridged. Anti-semitism pulsed like poison through the veins of the Jew-haters. In vain tried many respectable Christians in well organized circles as well as in different Jewish warding-off organizations to dam the cruel flood of discrimination which must, if unchecked, inevitably lead to crime.

Meanwhile on the political scene the "Democratic-Socialist" party of the German parliament representing the working class was branded as a Jewish invention to undermine the Government and Christendom. As a counterbalance the Christian-Socialist party was founded by one of the leading clergymen of the Protestants in Berlin. Closely connected with the government it became a tremendous power of evil in the fight against the Jews. The population of Germany at large including a great number of cultured persons, men of professions, authors, and publicists, scientists, educators, bankers, merchants, lawyers, doctors, etc., they all joint hands to combat the Jews. It became the leading issue of the day in Germany taking preference above all other matters. Toward the end of the 19th century the protestant clergy launched a vicious attack against the Jews as the arch enemy of mankind. Together with the Catholics the Protestants conducted fiercely the fight against the hateful race. Blinded in their unrestrained hate they unlatched the doors in the heart of men for deeds of unprecedented brutality to the shame of humanity and to the disgrace of the Christian religion - - to to unfold in due time - - no more far away. Germany was on her way to set the stage to become in straight line a state of medieval barbarism. It threw its dark clouds over the Eastern and Western hemisphere of the world. In Germany it pervaded the life of a Christian from the day on he was born: in the home of the child's

parents, by education in the school, by the sermons in the church, by exclusion of the Jews in many private and public institutions, and by nearly complete ~~segregation~~ social life.

The Jews played the politics of the ostrich; they had endured in their history many disastrous events; the revival of evil would to their wishful thinking ebb before it would drown them. But the more the Jews ~~mind~~ their own business the more they became successful, so much the more they were hated as unnecessary rivals and of course on account of religion and race. The agitation continued undiminished by some of the foremost leaders among the clergy and the politicians. These men did not hesitate to demand the expulsion of the Jews from the country and the destruction of Judaism. From the slums of moral decay in human society centuries ago the slanderous and barbarous attitude towards the Jews was renewed. On all sides threats were heard of bloody riots; in numerous communities the women started the commercial boycott; even the ritual accusation was not missing. It appeared in Prussia in 1881 by demolition of property, partially also of synagogues and cemeteries and again in 1891 and 1900. The political agitators circulated inflammatory brochures with scandalous accusations. But even if exposed as ~~scoundrels~~ these men won repeatedly seats in the election to the Diet (Reichstag), solely on their anti-semitic platform and became the idols of large sections of the German population. In political meetings all over the country ambitious anti-semites excited the mob, calling for violence and murder without interference of the German authority. The evil activities of Jew-baiting were favored by reactionary officials if their interest could profit there by. The antisemitic campaign was immense and lasting. The germinating power of vicious acts was inextinguishably incorporated in the very life of the Christian world. It sprouted into criminal acts and considerably overshadowed and overgrew the requirements of any religion to further in mankind culture, civilization, the laws of humanity, of justice and righteousness, of love, of mercy and peace. It all degenerated into a thin veneer of a glib and hypocritical confession. It is a small consolation that in the end wickedness destroys the evildoer.

In the beginning of the first world war, August 1914, the emperor of Germany called upon all parties to conclude a truce and bury their differences. It was of no avail and was commonly understood

with the supplement "Jews excepted." The bigotry followed the Jewish soldier right up to the battle front. At the first signs of defeat 1917 anti-Semitism emerged from underground to the open with newly fashioned songs of hatred against the Jews. The government eagerly took the opportunity to steer the people's indignation into the channel of anti-Semitism. The years after the lost war were in large measurement made to order to refresh the slogans of defamation against the Jews on religious, racial and social grounds.

The upheaval was indeed immense in the life of the German nation. The creeping misery of inflation of the German currency for example made no difference between Christians and Jews. Nevertheless the Jew became the scapegoat. The beast in man nourished in him through the decades of the last century with increasing perversity as we have seen, used unrestrictedly claws and teeth to hound and fret out the Jew as the source of all misfortune of unhappy Germany.

In the years 1920 - 1930 I was a member of the anti-defamation league and had to read a lot of devastating diatribes against the Jews. To account for them here I would have to repeat exactly what was said before in the sad story of Jewish persecutions. Horrible torrents of dirty waters were discharged over the country of Germany and abroad to get ready for the day to come to destroy the Jews and sing the favored song that Jewish blood must run from the sword. Irrisistibly the people yielded to the allurements because it flattered their innate instinct of a brute living within mind and heart since the primitive man appeared on earth. Give to these undersized - creatures suitable conditions and the "green light" to go ahead - - - and they break up as human beings. Incarcerated in the darkness of their stupidity, bigotry, brutal covetousness, they fall easily as prey to the charlatans and scoundrels in the world. And so it came to pass that the Jewish drama unfolded with the rulers of the nations in their "legal power and the dignitaries of the Churches in their "divine right", each and everyone on his destined place, and that the fatal course took shape. The pastures are green and the abyss is hidden - - and everybody is happy and smiles. It is the Jew and only the Jew "we are after", they tell you. So what!? Be quiet!. For the "good" Germans this insurance was quite allright.

With the founding of the Natl. Socialist party of the workers, 1919 - 1920, in Munich, the most vicious and brute organization



was set up in Germany to annihilate the Jews. The more they fought against the evil of slander, so much the more the billows of hatred overflowed them. The very word 'Jew' became a synonym of every crime thinkable. Germany was well prepared when that lunatic furious in Januar 1933 was installed as chancellor of Germany. "Leader, command we follow", was the welcome greeting of millions of Germans. It was a complete victory of the dark and ominous forces. The pitiable work during the last hundred years finally paid off in big dividends surpassing the boldest dreams of the instigators of destruction and death of the cursed race, the headstrong and obstinate Jews which could anyhow not be converted. Finally the united front of enemies had found according to the demands of their gospels the executor in a madman, a Catholic himself with the tactics of an experienced Jesuit-inquisitor: intolerant and merciless against the unbelievers, a miserable liar, a hypocrite, the very prototype of evil, the deputy of the devil on earth. This brutal creature was chosen as leader of Germany and designated as a savior and redeemer of Germany from that what they termed Jewish yoke. The authors and instigators could rest assured that their ugly work of the last decades <sup>will</sup> be completed in the near future; they could wash their hands in innocence as ~~to~~ to them in their gospels. Indeed the bloody pogroms and riots incited by the clergy and politicians in Poland and in Russia in the years 1882, 1903, 1905 - 06, 1919 etc., terrible as they were in their brutality, would fade before the satanic plot of German nazism against the Jews in Europe. The hatred against them has become an element in life of the Christian world; it worked like a derangement in mentally sick men. It could not be cured; it was a frenzy; it was by now a chronic disease.

Germany and the world at large stood on the threshold of a horrific tragedy when the furious was granted the power to rule Germany. He was about to put the spark on the combustible powder-keg causing the death of millions of Jews and many more millions of ~~human~~ human beings or the Christian faith, in starting the second World war termed as inevitable by the furious. Humanity had ceased to exist. When the holocaust had spend itself, the Germans were stunned, and so were the dignitaries as the spiritual leaders of christendom from yesterday. Germany was left with heaps of rubble as a monument of Nazism. But the human misery can not be expressed

in words. It is too terrible to comprehend it. " As you have done so shall be done to you. Your dealing shall return upon your head ( Obadiah v.15)

, The Nazi-furious started his cursed career with a psychologically perfect propaganda singling out the Jews on religious, racial social, and economic grounds as the fiend of Church and state institutions whose whose influence all over the world had to be eradicated. He booked for himself and his party a striking success. Then, to the delight of the Germans, the furious began the re-arming of Germany on the largest scale ever undertaken in any state. At the same time he eliminated thereby the unemployment of millions of workers. With unsurpassed hypocrisy he presented himself as the preserver of peace in Germany and in even all over Europe. The armed forces were needed against Communism emanating from Russia and threatening the world. The religious and secular leaders in Europe and the Western hemisphere looked with complacency at the furious German of Austrian and Catholic origin, even if one conceded that he was a furious maniac. The Jews and the communists just had to be eliminated for the sake of salvation of the Christian world. On the first of April 1933 a boycott against the Jewish commercial enterprises was ordered as the first step to erase the Jews from the economy in Germany. In consequence of this blow, the business slackened considerably. It was intensified in the following years. 1933 was only the start to get ready.

In the fall 1934 I received from my Brother the news that my Father was seriously ill which prompted me to leave at once for Stettin. I found my Father out of bed but his strength had all but given out. My Father was under doctor's care. My Brother kept the house in order with the help of a housekeeper. My Mother was not home; she visited at that time her near relatives in the city of Magdeburg, a larger industrial place. After several days of stay in Stettin I bade farewell to my dear Father with a heavy heart. On my return to Moerrach I decided to make a detour to pay a visit to my Mother also. She suffered since years from diabetes. Her health had deteriorated in the last years very much. I was received in Magdeburg with great joy by my Mother as well as by her Brother, my uncle David, a bachelor now retired as a former physician, and her three sisters, my aunts Mathilde, a widow, Cella and Betty who

were spintners. We spend a nice afternoon together embellished by a coffee party. Toward evening I took leave of them affectionately. Then I continued my journey with the night express to Basle. It was the last time that I had the privilege and pleasure to see them all alive. My Father closed his eyes forever on the eve before Jomkippur and my Mother followed him less than one year later.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 1935 our dear son Max was 13 years old. Max was well prepared by his teacher for the important day. The congregation of Loerrach participated sympathically. My Brother was also present together with other relatives for the special occasion. The day was like pausing on an oasis. We all liked to forget for the day that the sword of destruction dangled above the heads of the Jews.

In September 1935 at the large annual rally of the members of the Nazi party at Nueremberg/Bavaria the laws to isolate the Jews from the 'Aryan race' as the 'pure-bred Germans' were publicized. It was the warning that the nazy government was unmistakably on the road to extinguish Jewish life in Germany.

Since the educational system of the schools were in accordance with the nazy doctrine, remodeled, the teachers as well as the pupils had to join special nazi organisations. It was obvious therefore that a Jewish child had forfeited the right of education. Max and Hannele had to leave school at the obligatory age of 14 years old since it was not possible anymore for them to continue for three more years for a higher schooling. In due time Hannele started an apprenticeship as dressmaker in Basle and Max as printer and typesetter in his Father's plant. Twice a week he visited the continuation school for printers in Basel also. Max made good strides under the instruction of a Jewish foreman, an elderly well educated man whom I had shortly before engaged. Max proved to be such a devout, skilful, and intelligent boy that it was one of the greatest joy in all my years in business to have him arround with me. It all was a trial to give the children some resource to gain their livelihood after our emigration which had to be taken under very serious consideration.

The nazi monster steadily pursued its aim to annihilate the Jews and accelerated its dreadful steps from one year to the other. At the same time the nasis unified every thinkable function and every move of man, woman, and child in organizations under

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strongest vigilance in order to bring to perfection without loopholes the totalitarian state of a tyrannical dictator. The Germans followed with pleasure since they believed in the twofold purpose of the ~~nazi~~ <sup>nazi</sup> regimen, namely the building of a new powerful Germany in the world, and the necessary extinction of the hateful Jews and the communists of Russia. The Governments abroad considered it to be Germany's internal business what they did with "their Jews". It was allright when the Jews disappeared from all conspicuous positions and brought back to the stage of underdogs. And to build up a bulwark against Russia was also necessary. Why should the world worry about the furious leader of Germany? The last they would do was to care about the fate of the Jews.

This was most evident when Nazi-Germany in all the world was selected as the country for the Olympic games held in Berlin in August 1936. The visitors of the foreign countries, France, England, and America included, were greatly impressed what they saw and enchanted about their nazi host. Thousands of guests gathered at the entertainments lavishly given in their honor. They were duped by the camouflage and did not wish to notice the ominous signs of terror against the Jews.

In consideration of the mentality and the self-imposed stupidity of the foreign statesmen it was small wonder that the conference at Evian at the lake of Geneve in Switzerland, was doomed to failure. The President of the U.S.A. had initiated it in order to open the gates for the immigration of the oppressed Jews. Alas, the contrary of it was achieved. The hope of the Jews was shattered; they were doomed to perish as victims of the nazi massacre. The delegates returned to their ~~respective~~ countries and did nothing to facilitate Jewish immigration; but on the contrary they rendered it even more difficult or excluded the Jews from their country altogether. It is further worthwhile to note that the Pope as the deputy of Christ and thereby the supposed guardian of humanity, co-operated by observing strict neutrality and sitting on his throne in pious taciturnity.

The churches of the Catholics and Protestants had rendered valuable service to make the Nazis popular in their combat against the Jews. Therefore they thought it possible that Church and State could work together in an agreeable accord. But the clergy should

have known better. As early as 1926 the nazi-furious had made his public confession in his book "My ~~fight~~ <sup>struggle</sup> (mein Kampf) and had left no doubt about his vicious intentions. The book was sold by the millions. The furious nazi as a miscreant of sub-human dimensions united in his cursed person the trinity of a brute, a tyrant, and the representative of a totalitarianism that tolerated nothing and nobody besides him. It presents the picture of the Deputy of the devil on earth, not more, not less.

It resembled a mockery when in July 1933 the German government and the representative of the Catholic church concluded a concordat with the Vatican to 'improve' the relations with the Holy See. It stands to reason that the treaty would be broken in the shortest of time. It is hard to imagine how the ambassador of the Catholic church with millions of adherents could duck so deep - so low. We have to explain it by viewing the history of the Catholics where many times the political aims had the precedence over the theological ones. The innermost papal desire was to re-unite, as in the days of old, the Church and the State. But one can't make friendly treaties with known ~~criminals~~ without being suspected that one's own character becomes stained. The nazi-furious, as a born criminal, knew no other way to solve the self-made evil-problems which suited him, but to use unlimitedly the crime fit for a man of the status as a totalitarian criminal.

Pretty soon the Catholics were ordered to forget their co-operation and submit to the ~~nazi~~ dictate and bend down under the swastika and hide the ~~crucifix~~ or -- face brutal persecution. Up to now this kind of adorning the altar of the Church was the sole privilege of the Catholic hierarchy when they persecuted the heretics - mainly the Jews. Now for peace's sake and in the name of all the saints, this time the once sacred papal policy had ~~fired~~ <sup>been</sup> ~~back~~. Now they themselves were on <sup>the</sup> receiving side of the Nazi ledger.

The Catholics depended more on their powerful, well disciplined organization, while the Protestants preferred to rest their power on the State as the supporters of throne and altar. The Nazi goal was to create a Nazi-National Church of German Christians with the old German paganism as a substitute ~~of~~ <sup>for</sup> Christianity. It had therefore to obey the commands of the furious as the over-lord of the united Christian church under the swastika with the slogan

of race, blood and soil. In a short time the majority of the Protestant clergymen took the prescribed oath of obedience to the Nazi dictator who by now was in the position to compete, as it were, with the pope of Rome as the sole authority of German Christianity. The people were not aroused by the fraud since the Nazi virus, cultivated by the clergy, had grown exuberantly in their minds and hearts. For the Germans that bedeviled croaker was their saint and their Holy idol who provided jobs, created prosperity by rearmaments, restored the military might and gained one political success after the other by misleading the befooled and stupefied diplomats of Europe and the Western world, U.S.A. included.

There was a wide gap in the religion of the Catholics and Protestants. But as we have seen in the sad story of the swelling rise of anti-Semitism in the 19th century, both became excellent companions in the common endeavor to daub the Jews on account of race and religion with filthy accusations of being parasites in the structure of the German nation. The Catholics of course were well appreciated teachers in the field of atrocities against the Jews with regard of their many centuries-old experience before the Protestantism made its first appearance.

But the Protestants scarcely needed them. They had already the best teacher in the man who had founded Protestantism in the first half of the 16th century. He was a thoroughbred of Catholicism who had turned away to build a branch of Christianity suiting his own imagination. When the Jews, as they were expected to do, did not flock in wholesale to his newly modeled religion, his tried patience turned him into the most vicious hater in the development of anti-Semitism. In this respect he must have seen in his mother religion an outstanding disciple of which the church of the Catholics could be proud upon. The clergy of both branches of Christianity never had neither any qualm of their conscience nor did it occur to them that they violated the basic human tenets of any religion when they used in theory and practice their disgraceful and shameful tactics in persecution of the Jews.

The founder of Protestantism had set forth among smaller pricks the following order of action to destroy the hated Jewry. #1) their deprivation of all <sup>253</sup>possession; #2) the burning of the synagogues; #3) their confinement in ghettos; #4) their treatment like gypsies; #5) the use of every ~~devisable~~ <sup>imaginary</sup> measure to keep them in mental

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and bodily misery and captivity. #6) the expulsion of the Jews from Germany. Thus had spoken to the greatest delight of the nazis the great founder of protestantism, the saint<sup>ly</sup> clergyman, the professor of philosophy of religion.

These flagrant machinations of Catholics and Protestants as companions in arms and standard bearers in the Jew baiting campaign went on in different degrees through the decades before the elected furious madman appeared on the political horizon in Germany where he was enthusiastically welcomed as the savior and redeemer of Germany. The outcome was the most terrible one that mankind ever had experienced. If the spiritual leaders of the Christian churches within<sup>in Germany</sup> and abroad, of Germany and the political rulers as heads of the foreign nations had realized that they nurished at their bosom a poisonous snake, they may have been altogether confounded and confused. The policy of both of them had back-fired because they had not acted according to the morality and integrity imbued in the laws of inviolable human rights upon <sup>which</sup> that nobody trespasses without punishment in due time.

Now their action, if any, was too little and too late. This ugly upstart, the brown Catholic of Austria who never was anathematized by the Pope, presiding over Germany was a totalitarian one similar to Catholicism itself, that could be appeased only by obeying orders and by subordinating to the nazi enslavement.

The hour of trial had arrived. There were heros and cowards . There were martyrs setting their faith and belief higher than life itself. There were traitors and fellow-travellers among the millions of people involved in the unfolding nazi world- tragedy. between 1933 - 1945. Thus England produced a hero and formed a nation with the will to defend its freedom. There was France with her president of state, a former field-marshal, who turned into a nazi collaborator; but there existed also an underground movement of resistance with a general as leader of the French liberation forces. There were even men in Germany who set the <sup>by</sup> underground fighting in motion. There was the Norwegian Quisling, a synonym for traitor of his country. There was in the state of Denmark a people together with her king as heros. There was a Pope in Rome as deputy of Christ who kept hiding his conscience in silence as the safer part of bravery in the face of Jewish and - - Christian disaster. There were some

thousands of Catholic and Protestant clergymen who suffered hardship and even death defending their integrity and faith against inhumanity. In August 1939 the world witnessed the meeting of two equally perfect rascals when Russia and Germany concluded a treaty "to live in friendship for ever". It all fell apart when the German twin-colleague invaded Russia less than two years later with his armies.

With the beginning of 1938 the furious of Nazi-Germany had firmly established himself as a savage and merciless leader; he had united in his person and through his party the total power a state has to offer and ruthlessly pushed aside institutions and persons standing in his way - - Jews and non-Jews alike. And such were the rules and means against those who dared squeak or quarrel silently or openly : they all were quickly apprehended , prosecuted by special courts, marched off to concentration camps or just outright murdered. There could be no doubt anymore that in the course of 1938 the decisive blows would fall upon the Jews as preliminaries to their complete extinction.

In January of that year all passports were confiscated and traveling abroad came for the Jews to a halt.

The "little" passports destined for the inhabitants living along the border of Switzerland were ~~cancelled~~ <sup>cancelled</sup> for the Jews, with some exceptions for pupils or apprentices.

The incessant propaganda of inflammatory accusations was intensified by the press, by radio , and the party meetings.

Under these circumstances the business dissolved in an accelerated pace. In February blank forms were mailed to the Jews to declare their assets: their personal and real estate , their goods and chattels. The action was put under supervision of the Internal Revenue of the State. The meaning was that the Jew had to be robbed of all his possessions.

The Nazi-furious madman took one step after the other . It was not necessary to precipitate the movement of crime as long as it was favorable for the Nazis - (a) to preserve a good opinion in the world for Germany. Besides, it is a common habit of criminals to use camouflage.

Soon after, cards of identifications were issued to all persons to be carried permanently with them. The cards of the Jews were marked by a large "J" printed in red ink .

In April a summons was sent to all Jews in Germany, especially to those like us living near the border of a foreign country, to





surrender all accounts kept abroad. They threatened severe penalties against the violators. It was a devilish device of the malicious nazi policy to transform the Jews to the state of paupers. And moreover to deprive the Jews of the possibility to emigrate. Who in the world wanted people to become a charge to the welfare of any foreign country?

In the month of April the first instalment of the "Special Jew - tax" was already due for payment to be continued every three months. The business was nearly at a standstill. It was easy to predict the day of doom.

The deposits in the German banks of all Jews were put under state control. Bills had to be approved before their payments. For personal expenses only a limited amount was granted for each month. The urgency to emigrate weighed heavier upon us from one day to the other. The situation began to wear down our mind and our courage and hope to escape.

The fate of the Jews in Germany hung in the balance. We dragged on wearily through the summer months. On the first of October our foreman left for his home city Berlin. I was now alone with one printer and our Son as type setter. The nazi cells<sup>and</sup> formed in every plant, -business and office, prohibited that business orders were given to the Jews. In sharp contrast to the times before the Nazis when anti-semitism or better the war of anti-humanism was waged by the clergy of Christians jointly with the politicians and their henchmen, now in accordance with the totalitarian nazi rule the dreadful act of extermination of the Jews was the sole prerogative of the furious-maniac and his deputies. In times of old the Jews were accepted as converts but the nazis very efficiently did not want them even converted. It was against their<sup>nazi</sup> creed in race, blood and soil and their insatiable greed for spoil.

It was high time to liquidate the business and strain every nerve to find a country inclined to Jewish immigration. I had already tried my luck as everyone else of the members of our congregation and thousands of others in Germany. There were meetings to counsel the would-be emigrants or at least to give advise how to prepare for the emigration. But the lack of Jewish organizations at home and abroad made the efforts to get help nearly illusory. Moreover, the apathy of the Jews abroad was appalling. Up to now they scarcely

apprehended the terrible situation of German Jewry. There was not a well planned organization among the Jews abroad to be prepared for the acceptance of their oppressed brethren or to evoke successfully the help of their governments. The assistance from abroad remained sporadic and thus the result was meager and before long it was too late. The time had apparently passed since the Jews could be assumed to be one people wheresoever they lived. The nationalism which had spread since more than a hundred years over the world had separated the Jews by the barriers of their country. He was by now a national Jew of his country and did not look beyond the border. The fine Jewish perception was neglected that it was a moral obligation for him as a Jew to give aid and comfort to the suffering fellowmen. In Germany everyone was set on his own endeavor to find a way out of the disastrous onrush. The lucky ones were those who had some connections or relatives abroad. It became the sole care of German Jewry to utilize them. One had to be careful not to fall victim to unscrupulous agencies in Germany or abroad - only to loose money or, as in some cases, even to jeopardise his life.

During 1933 - 1936 it was comparatively not too difficult to leave Germany and find a refuge abroad. A greater part of German Jews was far-sighted enough to cut off their roots in Germany and establish anew an existence in a foreign country. The youth and those who had nothing to win or to loose in Germany, together with those who were financially secure through connexions abroad were among the first to leave the country. I had wavered too long already in my irresolution to face the inevitable command of preparing for the emigration <sup>in order</sup> to save our lives. Now and then had emerged an opportunity to do the jump into the uncertain future. But I never was ready to go when the one or the other country opened for a very short time only, the gates to Jewish immigration. Our apartment-house and the printing plant were not sold. Our baggage, as far as it was permissible, was not packed. Habit leads to <sup>postponement</sup> perseverance and it needs sometimes a severe shock to destroy all illusions about his rights as a human being and arouse a man to resolute action. Life had grown unbearable for the German Jew and despair took hold of him.

That was the true picture of myself when Thursday the 10 th of November 1938 dawned over Germany. On that day the pent-up hatred of the German people exploded terrifically upon orders of the

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furious nazi Tyrant. The members of all the nazi organizations that comprehended nearly all Germans had their field day. Finally they could let off steam as gangsters unrestrictedly. It was the day of riots ,of destructions of synagogues ,of torture and of murder. Yet it was only the beginning to extinguish the life of the Jews in Germany. Nazism is marked by totality : a dismal nazi peculiarity that also paved the way for their downfall. There were a thousand ways to solve the so-called Jewish problem whenever there was one. For the nazis existed only one and that meant the crime of total annihilation.

On the above mentioned day I went before 8 o'clock to <sup>the printing plant</sup> my business. Max and Hannele left the house with me to take the ~~street car to~~ Basel . For Max ,Thursday was one of the weekly days where he visited the technical school for printers; Hannele went to learn dressmaking. When I arrived at my office, I felt a strange uneasiness. The whole place looked desolate to me. Why was I still here ? Why did I stick to a lost <sup>cause</sup> ~~case~~? Why did I not put an end to a deplorable situation? While I still pondered over this in my morose thoughts, a man from across the street ,well known to me as the son of an old member of our congregation ,appeared in my office. He invited me to accompany him at 10 o'clock to the city hall and be a witness to his civil marriage ceremony. A special festival was planned for the afternoon because his parents celebrated their fiftieth golden wedding anniversary, also. The groom explained to me that I was a substitute for his cousin who <sup>was</sup> arrested by the 'Secret Police' at the early morning hour, together with the president of our congregation. No special reason was given. But it could be presumed that the nazi gangsters initiated a hidden action against all the Jews.

When I approached an hour later the house of my friends, <sup>built</sup> very near the synagogue, I noticed a riot around the building . A demolition squad was busy to tear down the house of worship. There was no interference. The people looked at it as if it was made for their amusement; they applauded as the beams of the roof tumbled down with a stunning crash in the interior of the synagogue. The furious maniac and his lieutenants had set in motion a far-reaching pogrom to devastate Jewish life in Germany. It is committed to the memory as a day of shame , as an outrageous deed in the annals of Germany's history.

Despite the fearful events the said couple had nevertheless the



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wish to get married. The table was already set for the double celebration in a festive mood. We sneaked separately through the streets and arrived safely at the city hall. There, we all waited more than an hour before the mayor decided that no marriage licenses would be issued on this day to Jews. On our way back, everyone for himself, I went home to <sup>Kashan</sup> dinner-hour, <sup>from</sup> 12:16 <sup>to</sup> 4.

It was nearly 12 o' clock on Thursday November the 10 th 1938 . Florly was in the kitchen preparing the meal which was usually consumed at 12.30. I was sitting in the rocking chair reading the local newspaper when the bell at the entrance rang. I went to open the door and was faced with two men in civil clothes. In a harsh voice one of them, apparently, the man who conducted the affair, announced that all Jews had to be taken in 'protective custody' by special order of the chief nazi command. I answered him that I didn't need the nazi protection and that I had lived peacefully for twenty years in the city. If I needed protection, I could resort to the code of civil law or seek assistance by the police. I refused firmly to be seized by order of the nazi party without being guilty of anything and without a warrant of the court. His face flushed with anger when he said that I did not know what was going on in Germany. He would give me a lesson that would be of an unforgettable impression to me. He threatened to use force if I any longer resisted to <sup>obey</sup> the order of Germany's leader. I interrupted his roaring voice and admonished him to behave decently in a private house, because the tenants are not accustomed to scandals. As an answer he turned to his companion and said with scorn: "Here we have made a good catch. ~~This Jew~~ This Jew dares the orders of our leader and revolts against the party." Then he commanded me again to follow him to the courthouse. I yielded finally and we left.

Florly, on her own decision, and despite the protest of that repulsive nazi, joined us. On the way through the streets he continued to be quarrelsome, unable to subdue his burning anger. I ignored him especially when he repeatedly asked us to walk faster. When we <sup>sail</sup> halted before the big gate of the outer wall around the courthouse he brusquely turned to Florli and said: "Do not come one step nearer or I will give you a kick in the stomach that you break down on the spot for good." <sup>by</sup> A woman of our neighborhood just passing took Florli home. Then we entered and he closed the gate leaving Florli outside.

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While we traversed the large yard that fierce nazi went behind me and beat my back with his fist. I turned around and told him to stop it since he had no reason to beat me. I threatened him that I surely would retaliate vigorously. Meanwhile we reached a second wall encircling the courthouse and jail. The gate was locked ;he had to ring the bell and we waited. Now ,he postec himself before me while his silent partner stood behind me and hollered waving his forefinger before my eyes:"In the confinement of that place where you are brought right now,you will get severe beatings and that will be repeated again and again till you succumb. I shall take care of this. You will think of me. You may even complain if you are still able to rise from the ground.But then a new terrible thrashing will end it - - all at once. " He laughed at his words viciously. The guard of the prison opened now the door and the violent nazi led me to the office of the police-inspector. We both entered while the unconcerned ,silent partner"left us.

The police-inspector was occupied with dispatching another victim of the nazi raid. Everything the man carried with him,all his money included, had to be deposited with the court. The inspector wrote an inventory and had it signed. The arch-nazi had seated himself across from the inspector at the writing desk while I was standing quite near to him. Now he asked from the inspector an official sheet of note paper headed with the name of the court of 'justice' of Loerrach. The nazi, burning with hatred ,himself a higher officer of the nazi party, stationed at the city of Karlsruhe, started to write swiftly while the inspector put some papers in order. I was able to read the letter while the miserable nazi was writing. It began with the words that I was an impudent and impertinent Jew. He further expounded that I was an obstinate and instigating man trying to counteract secretly and publicly the orders of Germany's chief nazi leader. For this revolting and obnoxious character of a Jew he demanded the capital phishment. The letter was directed to the commander of the ill-famed concentration camp of Dachau near the city of Munich (Bavaria). My blood froze as I read this death - warrant. After signing in bold letters, he ~~reached~~ <sup>handed</sup> the epistle over to the inspector, demanding that it be attached to the transport papers. The inspector did as being asked; then he hinted at me to put my belongings on the desk. He began to write, but soon he ceased

and rose impulsively asking the nazi whether he had arrested all the Jews on his list. When he denied, the inspector urged him to complete his task immediately because, he said, he was at work since the early morning hours and now it was after 1 o'clock and he wanted a pause for his dinner hour. Then he rang the electric bell for the jailer and continued to write. The arch nazi measured me coldly with malicious eyes and left, while the jailer entered. The inspector delivered to him the man still standing near the door and ordered me to remain in the office. Then he read carefully the nazi letter and asked me to tell him exactly what happened between me and the nazi chieftain. I knew that my fate was sealed; but the truth of it was so overwhelming that I scarcely could grasp the reality. There was no reason now to hide or palliate anything as I related the sad occurrence. Before I finished the inspector folded the ominous letter and -- before my eyes startled with unbelief -- tore the sheet to pieces and continued to do so till he could drop them like snowflakes in the waste basket. Then he rang the bell for the jailer to let me join the other Jewish prisoners. My life was saved by a miraculous interference. I was relieved of a terrible nightmare. Psalm<sup>30</sup>, verse 2 came to my mind: "I will extol Thee, o Lord, for Thou hast raised me up, and hast not suffered mine enemies to rejoice over me."

The members of our congregation, some over 80 years old, were assembled in a large room of the prison awaiting their transportation to a destination kept secret to all but me and I didn't tell it. None of us had eaten anything since breakfast. Before the departure from Loerrach at 7 p.m. a slice of dry bread was given to each man. Many disdained it; but I collected it hastily and filled the large pockets of my overcoat with it. After a short ride in requisitioned autos, avoiding the station of our city, we reached the main railroad junction at a small town. There we mounted the regular passenger train to which a number of cars for the captive Jews were attached. Wherever the train stopped, the rounded up Jews were loaded on the train. There were many of them with a placard hung around their neck which read: "I am an impudent and impertinent Jew." I felt terrible, thinking of the fate that awaited them. At the large station of Karlsruhe I noticed incidentally with satisfaction that the bloodthirsty nazi had left

the train to remain in that city. The next station was a railroad junction, branching out south-east toward Munich (Bavaria). A special train with thousands of Jews, gathered in a long row of cars, was formed. We travelled all through the night and on arrived on Friday the 11th of Novbr. 1938 at the concentration camp (Dachau).

I am not going to give a comprehensive representation of Dachau, that horrible vampire. It would hurt only myself -- and the scars are not healed -- while the reader turns away in dismay not being able to comprehend it. He may think that it was an exception which happened once and never again, although Jewish history speaks on many occasions throughout the centuries the same sad language. But he forgets the fact that man is a brute despite his haughtiness of living in an age of culture, civilization, law, justice and so on, and above all that he is a human being, a 'Mensch', as reassured by his religion. However, that all is a crumbling defence and can easily be converted to the contrary. All his ideals, how lofty they may be, soiled by violence or they are prostituted to the amusement of their producers. Man must be kept tightly harnessed all his life. If he is turned loose he is on the rampage like a beast of the jungle. Anti-Jewish hatred, as I pointed out, was nourished vigorously for many decades before the Nazi time. Now it was put to action anew and any human trace was erased. That was here the case.

I restricted my report on some events which were characteristic or occurred commonly or were significant to myself. By the way, I recommend the authoritative books on this subject also.

At Munich all Jews were transferred from the railroad coaches to cattle cars and squeezed so tightly for the half an hour ride that one could scarcely breathe. When the train stopped before the gates of the camp, the doors of the cars, one after another, were opened and the Nazis stormed inside; they used the butt of their rifles to push the prisoners off the cars. Many were seriously hurt. Later on they were registered, photographed, their heads shaven, and, given in exchange of their suits, pajamas made of cotton and striped in blue and white. Numbers were fastened to the sleeves. To recognize the Jews at once, the blue-white stripes were reserved for them alone. The pajamas for the exchange were scattered in big piles all over a large floor in the hall, for self-service. Every thing was secretly well prepared months ago. Patrols of two men at times belonging to the black dressed SS-formation, their loaded

② *Anthology of Holocaust Literature*

— by A. Glatstein, et. seq. among my library books

J.  
Glatstein

Jansilla (2)

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revolvers handy, walked like ~~helpless~~ around in the large hall.

*Poland*

While dressing myself, I noticed several invalids from the first world war with artificial limbs helplessly trying to do the job. The outrage done against these poor men was more than I could endure. Without regard of my personal security, I rushed to their help and exclaimed with a sounding voice, being beyond myself: "It is a scandal that the old soldiers, being shot to cripples for their country have to suffer such a shameful treatment. If Germany should ever be involved in a war, then Germany would lose it because of her infamous officers; they know as everybody else that Dachau is a torture camp. I despise - - " Suddenly I felt two hands closing firmly my mouth. A man had grabbed me from behind and whispered to me: " S., did you lose your reason? You will be shot this very night unless you are instantly quiet. The SS-men stand not far away and have already focussed their attention on you. Keep quiet." He took me by my arm and let me away. Only then did I realize the fatal danger to me and complied with my savior who became my best friend. In the night at 2 o'clock the prisoners were led to their respective woodsheds. 3 1/2 hours later all men had to fall in line for the roll-call. These calls were a common feature of the nazis and were performed three times every day: in the morning 5.30, at 12.30 noon and at 6 p.m. evenings.

On Saturday, the 12 th of November at 12 noon a number of large kettles filled with watered down soup was placed before the assembled men. Each man with a metal pot in his hand and in passing one of the kettles received about half a quart of that fluid. It was the first "meal" for most of us since we left our home on Thursday. In the morning, coffee-water was served in larger bowls meant for 3 or 4 men together. In the evening soup again and a small piece of bread as a ration for the day. It was a starvation diet.

The day was filled with military exercises in order to learn how to behave at all times. Lectures about the regulations of the camp and the severe punishment against violators were repeatedly given. Then there was maintenance work to do and preparations were made for a considerable enlargement of the camp. On the first Sunday afternoon three hours of rest were granted. Postcards were distributed by payment of postage. Everybody was eager to mail this card in order to let our families at home know our whereabouts. To facilitate the censorship, we agreed upon to give besides our



address some hoax message to read as follows: "I am in Dachau and I am well off. Best regards...."

It was a sign of life . How long? Nobody could tell in advance. The days were as dark as the nights ; the death lurked for everyone at any time of the hour. Horror and abomination of nazi-atrocities deformed us to miserable creatures. The SS-men, a criminal guard of Nazism, were especially trained for this purpose. It was not only the hatred by which they were actuated but as much by the lust for crime. The skull -and-bones as their insignia stigmatized their character as brutal. The Jew had to be mum at all times lest the SS-men construe a crime and punish the victims as agitators making inciting speeches by loitering around or as mutineers by sabotage at work. The sentences were sharp and precise : solitary confinement , twenty-five lashings or torture of any kind. The SS were just inventive to trump up accusations. In our shack with a capacity of 200 men were housed 350 men. After every night there was at least a dozen, found dead in the morning in each hut. The bodily and mental over-strain caused obviously the collapse . All day long one could hear the SS-men bawling or shooting or kicking or making dreadful predictions against the hateful Jew who was at last condemned to perish on orders by the 'beloved nazi-furious leader'.

The hatred of Jews was like a contagious disease spread by a hidden virus infiltrating mankind in Germany as well as around the world. The German tyrant in high esteem had firmly established his dictatorship upon Germany and it was by and by extended over the states of Europe as well. Not to forget that Germany commanded the largest and the most powerful forces in the world. The furious-maniac had silenced the Catholic and Protestant clergy; he had even concluded a concordat with the Vatican as mentioned before. The great statesmen of England and France had appeased him by a treaty in Munich(Germany). The annexation of Austria and Czechoslovakia and the inhuman persecution of the Jews did not much trouble the leaders of world affairs. The week protests, if any, were ridiculed by the furious before the Parliament and quickly forgotten by everyone.

There were about 14'to 16000 Jews as prisoners at the camp but the number of Christians who had offended the nazi doctrine was even larger. Discernible by the different colors of their nazi designated

garments ; one saw political, social, clerical captives or just hard-boiled criminals, mostly 'employed as assistants-guards' . Remarkable was the large number of the Christian clergy, the pastors and the priests. They thought it at first possible to co-operate with the Nazi regimen ~~despite the~~ <sup>in spite of the</sup> significance of the Nazi ideology. Defiantly these men were unshaken in the belief in their own gospel and in freedom of religion and stood their ground in the face of Nazi co-ordination and the majority of their own clergy. . " A la bonne heure" says the Frenchman and means "at the lucky moment or well timed" and I may say it would have been inspiring others with respect ....if . But regretfully I have strongly to emphasize that there was not a hint that they conceded the same right of religious freedom to the Jews too. It is understandable. Blindfolded by the bigotry of their faith they could not change their nature. In case they had forgotten the sin which stained their religious teaching in relation to the Jews, the Nazis helped them to remember. There was a pavilion with the inscription above the entrance "A Jew looks at you!" It was not destined for Jews. I dared enter secretly while the Christians were obliged to do so. This villainous exhibition showed the caricatured face in a repulsive grimace. The explaining text repeated the vicious and malicious accusations compiled from the vast library of Jew baiting. Further it gave the straight doctrine from gospel and catechism executed by the Christian clergy since centuries against the 'Christ-killers'. There were also the political accusations of the 19th century pointing at the Jews as the source of all misfortune of Germany. The wild propaganda of the Nazis was aimed at the perfect brainwash and as a remedy for everyone in doubt to "prove" that the Nazis dealt "justly" with the Jews while advocating persecution, expulsion, robbery, torture, and annihilation. The priest and pastor must have indeed felt a strange emotion; they must have left the exhibition dumfounded and perplexed by the truth that : evil shall kill the wicked ; and they that hate the righteous shall be held guilty( Psalm 34, v.22) and further that ingratitude is the reward of the Nazi world. Mark my word your ~~reverend~~ <sup>revered</sup> clergymen , the Nazis repay you "seven-times seven."

It is of no use that I expound elaborately the tactics in the proceeding of the pitiable <sup>and</sup> of the Nazi-wretches that shamelessly betrayed the creation of human beings. You must have seen them at

work ;you must have experienced it with eyes and mind wide open in order to understand it. You must not ask why or how could it happen; you must not demand reason when remorseless brutes are on the rampage. Therefore a few "simple" examples of nazi atrocities have to suffice.

On Monday, the 14 th of November 1938 ,on the fourth day after the arrival at Dachau in the early morning at 5.20 a. m. while assembling for the roll call I heard nearby a sharp detonation of a gun. Nothing special at Dachau. A murder had taken place . The murder of a Jew. It was like a sport for the SS, they were trained for it. Pretty soon I learned to my greatest dismay that the victim was my brother -in law; he was a professor at the college and forced to retire; he also was a veteran of the first worldwar. his wife mused later upon the murder of her husband and asked: " Does one shoot a man like a rat passing his way?" The answer, unfortunately , is: "Yes, if he is a Jew!"

Take the case of a man when he was supposed to stand motionless. The guards would search for a victim, rush at him and club his skull with the handle of his revolver till he fell to the ground .

An amusing game of the SS-guard was the occasion of giving a shower-bath to the Jewish prisoners. Douching alternately very hot and very cold, the victims were left thereafter standing outside in their pajamas for hours to dry in the cold sub-zero night air, wet and snivering . The result was inflammatory fever and death for many on the next day as the nazis had rightly expected it.

Such like devices to make life miserable were preferably set in motion on Friday evening or on Saturday at the camp-field.

To kill a Jew was just a gay nazi play. For the incident I am relating I may choose the heading "And , Jew, you have done it ,yet!" The SS-guards passed the front line of the Jews, standing at attention. They started to their amusement a game, asking the one or the other his occupation. They found every time a fault with it and gave the poor man a slap in the face. The Jews are all liars , they murmured as they passed me and stopped before the man standing to my left. He answered the question with the words : "I am a wine-merchant." The two SS-men mused on it and said: "Ha! - - a wine-merchant! With how many gallons of water did you dilute each barrel of wine ? ? " He was a man over 70 years old and of small stature. He answered

Professor  
Emst  
Beck  
Father of  
Inge Beck-  
Gibergier

firmly : " I never diluted the wine. "The Nazis much displeased with his answer punched him with the handle of their revolver : "Liar", they shouted, "you tell us at once how many gallons of water did you add to each barrel of wine? You have done it, yet ! Confess it !" When he denied it again he got a strong beating. "Jew, they said, "you have long enough created the German comrades . Our leader has made an end with it. "Jew, did you dilute the wine ? "Admit it " Again he answered : "I did not dilute the wine. The barrels filled with wine were often controlled by special officers." The SS were by now boiling with rage and knocked him nearly down while they bawled out: "You infamous Jew not only the German people but the officers also were defrauded by you? You simply put a barrel of pure wine in front of the controlling officers. Confess your crime ,Jew." He denied it ~~again~~, he looked very pale as if his heart was failing. The good wine-merchant explained that many times in his absence his cellerman showed them around. "Jew, you have done it yet; you have bribed the cellerman who was in your service .You have diluted the wine yet."The two SS-men struck the poor man continuously as he pointed out in a weak voice that the controllers had free hand to choose any barrel they desired to try." The SS-men maintained that a Jew without exception is an expert in lying, is a deceiver, is the prototype of a faker who gets rich and fat by exploiting the good - natured German people. "Confess ,you liar,"they shouted ,that you always diluted the wine without being detected . Both of them struck the helpless man furiously. I heard him whisper: "I did not dilute - - - and fell like lifeless to the ground. Then the SS -men gave the often heard order : "Drag him aside and throw him on the lawn." The guards turned away while the one told to the other : "It is unbelievable how tenacious of life such a profiteering Jew can be. ."

On a Saturday afternoon a troupe of new-comers arrived and were placed not far where the Jews exercised. The new " recruits" were rudely ordered to undress and change very fast. Suddenly two SS punched one of the men with their fists and revolvers aiming at his head. They bawled that he did not obey orders characteristic of an obstinate Jew. Struck vigorously again and again the man sank to his knees and died before our startled eyes. Then the guards shouted toward our group to bring the wheel-barrow and put him in the mortuary. My comrades said to me : " S. go ; the order is meant for you!" But I

answered that I am frozen ,that I can't move. They have killed the man,they may take care of the corpse." Finally someone else did the sad job.

One afternoon a slim,old man more than 80 years old collapsed at work. I stood near him and caught him in my arms. Then I took him to his hut to put him on the straw or his usual resting place. Upon entering the shack a SS-guard rushed at both of us with a heavy stick in his hands ready to deal a blow at us. I shouted : "What are you going to do ? Do you want to kill a dying man or is it aimed at me?" He paused and hollered : "Let me catch you once more and you are done ! You are instructed and know that it is strictly forbidden here that one Jew gives comfort or aid to another Jew !" I went in silence back to my working place. What inhuman brutes they are.

One day at the noon intermission I met a man speaking with some of his fellow Jewish prisoners. His face was red from weeping. He told us that he just had learned about the violent death of his two brothers -in - law living with him in the same city. : " How can I return home ",he lamented in despair and tell my two sisters that their husbands are dead. Both murdered.

One more incident has to be related because my life itself was at stake. It happened time and again that a Jewish prisoner was shot under the false pretence that he was just caught as a runaway although it was all but impossible to escape. There was a wire-ditch around the camp filled with water. Opposit and parallel to it was a strong wire-grating about three yards high, and over and above, it was electrically charged, made to kill if touched. Several observation-towers erected on the camp were equipped with modern devices to shoot with greatest accuracy at even remote objects. At night searchlights illuminated the different areas. The towers were constantly occupied by machine - gunners. Patrols marched everywhere.

As it usually was the case when the SS-men had a sinister plan in mind, a Jewish company was ordered to take exercises away from the main road on a lonely place of the vast campground . This time I belonged to such a company. At arrival we were ordered to be at a standstill. We noticed two special SS-men waiting for us and now walking leisurely forth and back along our front line. With greedy eyes they search for a victim to kill. We all had

heard rumors about the procedure and each of us had an uncanny feeling. In a few minutes these black clad brutes of the elite-guard of the "furios" would <sup>soon</sup> make their decision. A murder will be committed. Who will be the condemned man? They pointed at me! "Jew march forward and run forth and back at command!", they shouted. "Run faster or we will compel you to it by kicks." The one guard stood at the left and the other one at the right side of my "race-track". One minute more -- the company would be ordered to march off and . . . a life will soon be extinguished. At this very fateful moment something happened. There was no known precedent to it; no parallel case like this had ever occurred before. One Jew was as good as the other to be their victim. It remains an inexplicable interference with their routine when they ordered me back to my place in the company and -- chose another man instead --- a tall, stout fellow. Our company left with me in their midst while the tragedy was completed by the savage fanatics. It was a cowardly murder. While the unhappy man was running fast, his leg was given a tip so as to force his fall to the ground. Then he was shot in the back of the neck. The SS-men reported him as caught while trying to escape.

On my return to the living ones I was in a state of indescribable emotional excitement. It comforted me a little only when told that many of my fellows had exceedingly regretted to lose one of the best comrades. Although shaken, I found consolation in the holiness of our superb religion. I did not waver in my belief. At the morning roll calls, while guards went along the rows of thousands of prisoners, I recited in a low voice to the astonishment of my fellow sufferers parts of the morning prayers and many a Psalm by heart. I lived in the steadfast conviction that I would survive the brutes and see the day of my release to the joy of my beloved family. There were many who lived in a desperate mood. The desolation of our life at Dachau wore off our inner strength. Will-power was necessary to survive. The day of reward was indeed nearer than I expected.

In December 1938 the expulsion of the Jews from the German economy was decreed by the Nazi-government. Thus, with the 31st of December as the deadline, all Jews were deprived of the right to earn their living. The men who still owned their businesses were

noted down for release in order to 'sell' off their enterprise to a nazi caller. I belonged to this category. Men over 65 years of age were also included for release. The dismissal of the Jews from the camp was put through in small groups of 50 to 100 men at a time. On Saturday morning ; December 10 at the roll-call my name among the men to be set free was read out. First we had to undergo a medical inspection at the presence of two SS-men. All men whose body showed signs of ill-treatment or frost bites were kept back at the camp. I was glad that a major wound on the inner side of my left forearm remained unnoticed. The lesion was intentionally inflicted on me in the infirmary when I applied for a bandage only. I had taken it off and kept the arm closely to my nude body while passing the inspection. But later when all men had to appear before another commission which scrutinized the discharge papers I ran in an obstacle. There were only less than 20 men left for the examination and when my name was not called by now I was alarmed. I went to the clerk to inquire about it. He was a retired Austrian general who had opposed the nazi invasion of Austria. He was kept at the camp as a political prisoner and worked in the office. He told me that he had no discharge papers for me. I firmly asserted that my name was called up. He said that I must be grossly mistaken. Now I was really disturbed. After a short reflexion, I went back to tell him that I myself had read my name "Heymann Selinger " clearly on the list of dismissal. He looked up in astonishment to me and asked : "What is your surname ? Is your paternal name Heymann or Selinger?" I said: "It is Selinger !" On account of my explanation it began to dawn on him. He turned to the lad beside him who was his office helper and advised him to run to the office as fast as he possibly could and look at the files under the name of "Heymann" for me . The boy did so and presented on his return my papers of discharge. The good general said to me : "You are lucky. You never would have been released because your papers were filed away for good.!" I made it, with my papers in hand, just in the nick of time for the verification. From there we went to the cloak room and received our clothes back. Towards evening we marched to the station of Munich and everyone waited for the train leaving in his desired direction. Each man had to pay his own fare or if he was without sufficient

means he had to borrow from somebody else. Representatives and even nurses of the Jewish congregation of Munich took also care of us. When I asked one of the nurses for a bandage she was shocked seeing the wound on my arm; she insisted to take me to the hospital. But I refused and promised to visit a doctor the next day in my hometown. By the way, the treatment there lasted more than two months.

The Jewish prisoners who had returned to their families had the uneasy forboding that the stay in Germany was a dangerous living as fate may decide about them. There was only one path left for his salvation and that meant to leave the country fast and start life anew. However, the most urgent wishes of emigration were in stark contrast to the possibility of realization. In the meantime the Jews of Germany lived on borrowed time. Nobody knew when the brutes would strike again. On Monday morning after my return I had to report to the 'Secret Police'. The Jews were kept under permanent surveillance. ~~But I did not go to Germany as I was limited to 3 months of stay in Germany.~~

I was welcomed at home by our dear Mutti (mother) and our dear daughter Hanneli (Janet). Where was our dear Son Max? Both children as I related had left on that fateful day of 10th of November 1938 for Basel. Now I learned that Max had been warned by a thoughtful friend of ours not to return. He went instead to Mulhouse in France to live there with our relatives. He could be absent on a visit abroad only six weeks and then had to come back or lose his right to return to Germany where they would cancel his citizenship. As his Parents we stood before the fateful question whether to let Max remain in France as an ~~immigrant~~ <sup>refugee without papers</sup> or ask for his return to us. Our relatives wanted to keep him and dear Mother was inclined to follow the advice of her Sister Bertl. I was against it. It was a very hard decision and weighed heavily on my conscience to take the responsibility for Max's future life.

It was known that France was not a trustworthy country. Some French politicians had even warmed up to ward Nazi-Germany. We as his Parents and Hanneli as his Sister were left without chance of success to receive passport-visas - - while Max could enter France only under the condition to join the army within a few weeks when he became 17 years old. If he returned to L rrach he could be called when he was between 17 and 18 years old to forced labor in Germany. Nevertheless, I insisted that Max had to return



from France in order to prepare on a legal basis his exit from Germany and his entry into another country. There were rumors that youth had a chance to immigrate in oversea-countries. In our dilemma we learned through our niece, Inge Beck, that England was willing to receive a small number of Jewish boys. Sponsor was a congregation of a Christian Church. Yielding to the grave situation of our time, I gave my consent. Mutti got now busy to expedite Max's departure. Hannele continued with her schooling as dressmaker in Basle. As an apprentice, she still possessed an identification border-pass <sup>Inge's active concern about our plight</sup> ~~for a few weeks~~ <sup>for a few weeks</sup> ~~to Basel~~ <sup>to Basel</sup>.

I was occupied with the liquidation of the printing plant. But first I had to declare my income tax of 1938 to the Internal Revenue. If a man is forced by law to sell within the three weeks left till 31 st of December as deadline, then it is understandable that people take advantage of it. I had hesitated too long to separate from the business that I had successfully built up, together with Florli's help, during the last twenty years of intense work. In the face of a threatening disaster I gave away my goods and chattels at any price, to the first customer who made an offer. What I had cherished as my very existence was given away to ruinous prices. On 23 rd of December 1938 the contract of sale was signed. One month later we got rid of our apartment house in the same way. Cash payment was essential because large sums had to be paid as special tax assessed to the fortune of Jews. All payments from sales has to be made on blocked bank accounts. The government used the money for re-armament of the military power. It was easy to predict the day when all Jews would be left in a destitute state. And what would happen then?

Christian friends wishing well to us urged us to emigrate <sup>leave the</sup> ~~country~~ <sup>country</sup>. That was just what we desperately tried to do. But where to go? There were already rumors going around that the Jews would be forcibly deported. I lived at that time like in a mental chaos pursued by the nightmare of the scenes at Dachau. My endurance was put to the test when one day special SS-agents appeared as auditors of my books. Each Jew living along the frontier was suspected of currency smuggling. The punishment would have been concentration-camp confinement. Thanks to my good knowledge of book-keeping and commercial laws, all was found in good order. I had passed a vital examination because the faultless result

of it had to be stipulated beforehand in order to get ~~the~~ governmental permission to leave the country.

In March 1939 I fell sick of inflamed eyes. It got so serious I had to see a specialist in Lörren who transferred after treatment to the clinic of the University in Freiburg when the condition of the eyes alarmed him. The next morning I arrived by train together with Florli at the clinic where I entered as a privat patient. The Professor too was alarmed after he examined my eyes. It was high time that I had arrived. I lived through the first 24 hours in greatest apprehension till the eyes had passed the crucial test. Slowly they improved. The Professor had assured me at the beginning that he doesn't make any discrimination between his patients. He kept his promise very well, although the nazi doctrine had invaded the clinic too.

In April while I was still in the hospital, dear Lutti and Max paid me a farewell visit in Freiburg. Max was on his way to England accompanied by Mother as far as Frankfort on the Main-river. Florli had been indeed very efficient to conduct the complicated procedure of emigration for Max. Hard as it was for us to fit in with the needs of the present, it was at the same time a relief to know Max out of the relentless nazi grasp. The parting was naturally of great cordiality --hiding bravely our feelings. Nobody could predict when and where we would meet again in this world.

So far nothing had shown on the horizon for us to emigrate. Moreover, with the departure of Max we had lost the precious "officer of communication" with Basle, Switzerland. He possessed, like Hannele, still the frontier pass and <sup>this</sup> was very important in the preparation of our emigration. He was for us the confidential clerk <sup>in charge</sup> and exceedingly fitted for the task. But it was impossible to bind his future, at his dangerous age, to our uncertain fate, when there was a way out for him. All our love and appreciation and the blessing of his Father and Mother accompanied him, with hearty thanks for everything, in that hour of farewell.

At the ending of April, I returned home <sup>from the hospital</sup>. All our efforts were now renewed to find a country of refuge. Moved by the November -pogrom a number of Jews in America issued voluntarily affidavits <sup>in Germany</sup> necessary for the immigration to the United States. We also 'had' received even two of them. One came from a complete stranger in Florida through the intervention of one of Florli's Christian friends.

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Among our christian friends who gave time and effort to help us in our desire to emigrate , one of them deserves a special thanks. It is Mrs. Hilda Christen. Hilda lived in the neighborhood of Florli's fatherhouse in the City of Loerrach and remained good friends since their schooldays. In her youth Hilda emigrated to the United States where she married.

Hilda's mother was a loving character who really loved her neighbor as herself. Mother Christen urged her daughter to look around in America and produce for us an affidavit. It was hard work to succeed. As Hilda wrote , she found two kinds of people , the one who wished to do it but had not the means, - - the other had not the heart and the courage and were afraid to lose money. Hilda found with the help of the "National Council of Jewish Women" the right man who gave the important affidavit that even provoked later the admiration of the American Consulate in Panama.

After her Husband's death and without children Hilda moved back to Loerrach where she lived out the last years of her life. We all remained lifelong friends.

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The other was from a friend of a remote acquaintance of ours. .  
 (The ~~latter~~ <sup>latter</sup> was cautious enough to inquire first about our means  
 of ~~self-support~~. For the time being, the affidavits were useless  
 because, on account of the <sup>quota system</sup> ~~quota-system~~, we had to wait about two ~~to three~~  
 years to make use of them. At any rate, the documents were deposited  
 at the American Consulate in Stuttgart, Germany and we received the  
 registration number effective for all of us. <sup>At the consulate in the United States.</sup> To remain in Germany  
 under the dominant conditions was impossible. Therefore we needed a  
 country where we could stay till we were called up in accordance  
 with our registered number. To make things worse, the nazis cancelled  
 the original permission to pay the passage out of the emigrant's  
 own funds in German money and demanded that the Jews abroad should  
 pay for it. The emigrant going overseas had to prove that this was  
 done, before he could leave. The world had virtually closed the  
 gates to Jewish immigration. Even the liberal democracy of the  
 United States of America did not budge one inch from her cumber-  
 some immigration-laws in spite of all the human misery suffered  
 by the Jews in Germany. The nazi-furious-maniac boasted with  
 scornful laughter: "Why should we suffer the Jews when the entire  
 world rejects them?" The outlook was gloomy indeed.

The sorrowful picture was drastically demonstrated by the  
 accident that befell the emigrants from Germany on the voyage  
 to Cuba. The steamer St. Louis arrived with 972 passengers who  
 had received their visas and landing permits after a sum of  
 2000.-\$ was deposited in their name as means of their livelihood.  
 Cuba was mostly considered as a transit country only. That was  
 in May 1939 when we also had applied for Cuba and were waiting  
 for our visas. Listening to the radio we heard with consternation  
 that the government of Cuba had abruptly closed her country like-  
 wise for Jewish immigration. The liner was left helpless at sea  
 with her human cargo debared from the landing ground. The German  
 captain of the steamer had compassion on them and left no stone  
 unturned to help his unhappy passengers. He did not return to  
 Germany, because the concentration camp where many of them had been  
 before, would now be the lot of all of them. He dispatched cable-  
 grams to the world, especially to oversea countries imploring the  
 authorities to give an asylum to the persecuted people. <sup>During</sup> ~~During~~  
 the ocean for a couple of weeks he repeated his calls for help.

(see newspaper-cuttings)  
 'Cuba'

Yet, the world was all but silent. Cablegrams were sent again and again to the well known Jewish organization of America and even to the President of the United States. But the captain pleaded in vain for the Jews. Finally the countries of France, the Netherlands, and Belgium agreed to receive one third each of the passengers. They were placed for temporary stay in camps. The final solution of the fate of the poor refugees occurred when the three countries were invaded by the Nazi armies in 1940. Then all but a few perished through Nazi atrocities. Towards the ending of May 1939 Florli and I decided in favor of a visit to my Brother Moritz and his wife Erica in Stettin. A special amount of money was granted to us by the German officials for the journey. At our arrival we also met by chance the Brother of Erica. Moritz and his wife, there were no children, occupied a nice apartment in a huge building of 24 units that our Father had bought more than ten years ago. In sharp contrast to the eagerness of the majority of the large congregation of Stettin to emigrate, my Brother remained undecided. He had tried of course. He had written lots of applications especially to firms abroad which dealt with <sup>leather</sup> ~~leather~~ as a producer of men's suits. <sup>But even my own father</sup> But all his efforts had ended in failure. He had retired from business since a couple of years; <sup>but would not really give up</sup> if he at the past <sup>had</sup> had made up his mind to sell the building, <sup>he would have been successful</sup> he would have been successful to emigrate. But the deceptive conception that the Nazi hurricane of destruction would pass him as it did during the November pogrom, confused him. He said to me: "If the Nazis take even large bites of my possession it will be left enough for our modest sustenance. You may emigrate and let me know how you are." <sup>Living?</sup>

The impossibility of a decent human being to imagine the diabolic machinations and the hellish brutality incarnated in a deformed creature of bestial dimensions led to an agonizing death of thousands of Jews. It was the declaration of bankruptcy of the human society and its secular and spiritual institutions, defiled by cowardice, by meanness, and by baseness of the human character. Everything had to a certain degree happened before, during the centuries, only the pretence had changed and was in our days accelerated by the known German expediency. *efficiency*

By all the discussions about emigration, the fact remained that we, too, could not make any positive proposition to the point in question, although we lived just across the border of Switzerland. Moritz Erica could have emigrated to Shanghai or Hong Kong as it was possible many Westimers used their visas in this way.

But since we had the experience that we missed the boat because we were not ready to go when somewhere abroad the gates opened for a short while, we finally realized the urgency to stand ready to leave at the given moment. Therefore we would start at once after our return to Lörach to complete our belongings as far as possible, <sup>and to</sup> pay all special assessments and clear the way to obtain the permission to leave the country, and to receive the coveted passports. While we were in Stettin, we also took the opportunity to visit the graves of my late Mother in Gartz and those of my late Grandparents in Greifenhagen. We also went to the graves of our late Father and our Stepmother in Stettin. We found in this city the graves in good order as well as in Gartz. But when I thought to take a look at the old synagogue of my birthplace, I encountered a picture of devastation. The house of prayer was burnt to the ground. A heap of debris was all that was left as a shameful monument of groundless hatred against the Jewish people to whom the the Christian inhabitants in great number should have been thankful for the opportunity to earn their living. There were neither in Gartz nor in Greifenhagen Jews existent anymore. But in Greifenhagen the nazi vandalism had raged in even a more terrible way of devastation. Not only was the synagogue demolished but also the cemetery. The resting place, of the dead were disturbed, the ground of the graves and the broken tombstones were piled up to unsightly heaps. In remembering my late Grandparents who <sup>had</sup> on their good deeds enjoyed such a fine reputation in the city, I was filled with sadness. A few days later we had to say good-bye. With a heavy and sorrowful heart we bid farewell to our dear relatives. It was for ever. We never met again!

We returned home to our task to be prepared for the emigration. With the help of a legal adviser in Freiburg who was also specialist of Jewish emigration laws, we <sup>managed</sup> to overcome the various difficulties. The van, a large wooden box, was lifted on a truck and taken for storage to Basle, Switzerland. It contained a variety of many kinds of furniture and household goods. Further we had several trunks with clothes and different kitchen articles for the immediate use in daily life; the trunks were marked to be taken with us on our voyage. For the permission to export the goods, we had to pay the estimated cost-price of about 8000 Mark or about 2000.\$ to the government. The whole work was done mainly by dear Florli who had purchased skilfully manifold objects in addition to our

belongings. Florli had arranged everything to run smoothly like on an assembly line on the day the shipment took place in the presence of two customs officials. Our lovely daughter proved to be beyond the call of duty with respect to her youth, as extremely useful; moreover she developed to an excellent officer of communication between us and the people in Basle who tried to help us.

We were now ready to leave Germany at short notice. But the miracle we had waited for seemed to be obscured in mystery. There was not a hint of hope for our emigration. We lived in the ever present menace to be seized again and this time probably all three of us. Hannele was still with us and the chance for her to seek refuge in Switzerland was problematic. To think of the ending of our situation spelt despair. There we lived in the now all but empty rooms as tenants in the house we once owned, and waited from one day to the other in vain.

Flory had mailed with unceasing effort applications to consulates and governments all over the world. Then we waited from week to week, ~~from month to month~~. But when the answer, if any, finally came, our request was denied. Many ~~as applications~~ <sup>for visas</sup> under negotiation seemed initially of great hope; yet they all ended, to our greatest dismay, as a hoax. ~~failures~~.

Many people crossed the French border under some pretext or manipulation; but I refused to enter a country illegally and being prosecuted by French law, although our relatives in France encouraged us to it. In the last days of August 1939, was an unexpected chance to obtain a frontier <sup>border</sup> pass for one day only to visit Basle. Hence, we did as many others <sup>did</sup> under the same stress: as we and crossed the ~~border~~ <sup>as</sup> pseudo visitors. The idea was to legalize our entry at once and obtain the permission to stay for a limited time <sup>to</sup> secure a visa to an overseas country. On the 31st of August we remembered modestly Florli's birthday. The next day, the second world war was wilfully started by Nazi Germany. We were told that we are now political refugees and, according to a tradition of old, had the asylum rights to remain in Switzerland. The friendly people who all tried to help us were right, since the history of their country confirmed it - - but, alas, not today anymore, if the refugees were Jews. Switzerland clung obstinately to her policy in rejecting Jewish immigrants; it was very humiliating to us. Switzerland has a free press and the people got detailed reports about

the cruel persecution of the Jews in Germany. The attitude of the Swiss Government meant for many who had to return to Germany ~~in the future~~ the certain death at the hands of the Nazis. By the way, we were already marked down as undesirable newcomers because our former request for immigration was denied and the file of it kept in Basle. An attempt, tried by some people to escape to neighbourly France, was also doomed to failure because the frontier was patrolled by a strong police force on guard against Jewish refugees.

On the second of September 1939 we were back in Lörrach. We moved to new lodgings at the Graben-street where we occupied the second floor. The house, a three story building, was abandoned by the former Jewish owners. <sup>It was</sup> a couple <sup>living</sup> on the second floor <sup>had</sup> fled to France where, <sup>there</sup> a year later, <sup>they</sup> were apprehended by the nazi occupation forces. On the third floor two other Jewish families had taken quarters. Downstairs were the closed business premises.

Lörrach was a frontier city and only a few miles away from the trenches along the river Rhein as a defence line against France. Lörrach and surroundings had developed as a deployment field. The streets were clogged by military detachements and their vehicles. It was a disturbing tumult with curfews for the Jews and by rumors that the city would be evacuated. Air raids could be expected at any night. Victuals were rationed and so was the fuel. It could be assumed that the spreading war would hatch fatal consequences for the Jews. There was about still a quarter of a million of them in Germany kept like captives at the whim of a ruthless government bent to destroy them. Our downfall seemed inevitable. We could not imagine how to escape from our predicament. Depressed as Florli and I were, we found great comfort in the presence of our deeply beloved daughter in her cheerful but calm attitude to the life's misery that had befallen us.

It was during the week before Rosh-hashana which occurred on Thursday, September 14, 1939 that we made up our mind to travel to Constanzt, nicely situated at a large lake, and stay there over the holidays. We wanted a few days of rest at a remote quiet city: then return to Lörrach and renew our efforts to emigrate. We had a few addresses of Jewish families in Constanzt who operated private pensions. At our arrival we were told to our surprise, the nazi permit of residence, ~~and~~ even for the stay over night, was out of question for Jews as newcomers. It was strictly forbidden by the local command of the nazis. It was clear the Jews lived in fear as everywhere



else. It was late in the afternoon and there was no opportunity more to return by train. By chance we noticed a brass plate on a private Christian house offering accommodation to transients. We asked and were accepted without further questions. But it was obvious that we could not stay longer than one night in Konstanz. Disillusioned once more we took a stroll through the ancient city to inquire about the train leaving the next day. When we passed a store with a display of rucksacks we bought one to be prepared for an eventual evacuation of our home town where none could be bought anymore. We discussed also the possibility to continue our travel to the big city of Munich where many Jewish families to our knowledge had taken refuge just to be out of sight of the nazis at home. But we rejected the plan because then our connexion with Switzerland would be disrupted and besides, we could now without being noticed slip back to our lodging in Lorrach. We had a lone-some holiday. Nothing had happened in the matter of our emigration while we were away. What could be done? We sat isolated like in a trap. There was no ray of hope.

We had successfully passed all requirements necessary to obtain the German passports. We were in good standing since we had paid all special taxes imposed on the Jews. The diverse certificates of the public authorities of the State and City testified the correctness. It stands to reason that our testimony of good conduct through the years of residents were blameless. Well then, the passports were handed to us. But where to find a country willing to grant us a visa and make the passport the most precious possession for us? All our endeavors mainly conducted by dear Florli had ended in hopeless waiting, as stated before.

A bad stumbling-block was the awareness that a visa issued by a foreign consulate residing in Germany was virtually useless for us since in many cases pre-payments for entry into the foreign <sup>country</sup> had to be made in dollars; and further there was the necessity to pay the passage also in American dollars. We could not do that while still in Germany. By the sharp control when passports had to be presented at the last railroad frontier station of Germany by the Jews leaving the country, we could not show the evidence that the payment of the passage required in foreign currency was done in our favor by some resident abroad. Therefore it was mandatory for us to enter Switzerland like any common border resident through the so-called

small frontier traffic where the control was negligent and then start the emigration from our neighbor city Basle.

It was of course necessary that we posed as inhabitants of Basle in order to induce a consulate located in Switzerland to issue a visa for us while still living in Germany. I contacted the agent who was helpful to arrange our entrance in August that turned abortive. On our meeting during the third week of September in the waiting room of the railroad station Basle of the German section I submitted to him my emigration device and urged him to approach personally or by phone all foreign consulates residing in Switzerland. I emphasized the great importance that only such consulate general could come into question that was empowered to issue the visa without further delay. Too much time was already wasted by the correspondence with oversea countries. I promised him a substantial commission as a reward for him. He agreed to my project and asked me to return after three days to learn the results.

The outcome of his inquiry was meager. All but one of the foreign consulates had refused to issue a visa without consulting their government abroad. They did not come into consideration once more since dear Florli had already long ago petitioned most of these foreign administrations for visas. They were denied or not answered at all obviously because we were Jews. Now time was very essential to us. The only country suitable for us was the Republica Dominicana with Santo Domingo as port of call. The consul general residing at Bern, the capital of Switzerland, was willing to issue the visas immediately upon presentation of the passports. That was sweet music to my ears since it could serve as a stepping-stone to leave Germany for good. But there were strings attached to it. The government wanted to make a good profit from the Jewish misery by granting visas to Jews. They demanded a considerable amount of dollars as a head-tax for each adult. The money had to be prepaid as a deposit with the consulate and was forfeited as soon as we would set foot on Dominican soil. My agent set as a new date for our meeting, Monday the 25th of September 1939 asking me to bring our passports along. *It would be better to avoid the landing in Santo Domingo*

In our preparatory efforts our beloved Hannele was of immense importance since she alone had a frontier pass to enter the city of Basle. Unconcerned by the fact that we all were repulsed from

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Switzerland in the first days of September, she went nevertheless daily back and forth between Lörrach and Basel. In the cheerfulness and innocence of her youth and the loveliness of her appearance, she easily won friends and cleared the way for success where others would have totally failed.

On Saturday the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 1939 was Jomkippur. I rose at seven in the morning and was ready to commence my prayers when I heard a strong knocking at the house door. I told Floni that I am not going downstairs to open the door. If somebody has the wish to enter he may break down the heavy entrance door. I want to have my peace because it is Jomkippur. After some time the tumult ceased and it was quiet again. What was the matter? The police was there. All Jews had to carry themselves the radios to the police station because they were no longer permitted to possess them. And that exactly on Jomkippur. At that day we were alone in the house: the doors locked and the shutters closed.

Monday the promising day had come. I was of good cheer when I was on my way with my three passports in the pocket to deliver them to my agent. The combined Swiss-German railroad station was spreading over a huge area. An imposing edifice served the public and the administration. The station was equally important for the traffic of both countries. The building was divided into two parts. For Germany it was the terminal and a transfer station. For the Jews was this terminal with its large waiting room like an island where they could meet with their friends and discuss the ~~over all~~ important problem of emigration. During the first world war Germany had closed her part of the station and had used instead a small border town on her own ground. If it would happen during the second world war as it was expected with certainty, then we were fatally trapped without a door to escape. Reason enough to be in a hurry.

I was comfortably seated in the compartment of the train on my way to meet my Swiss emigration assistant. At <sup>the</sup> ~~a~~ <sup>suburban</sup> ~~station~~ just off the border was a short stop. There two SS-men entered the compartments one after the other and asked everybody to show his identification-card which had to be on the person at all times. As one of them glanced at my card with the large "J" on it he hollered: "Jew go out! Jews are forbidden <sup>ad</sup> to enter any station without permission." He kept me two hours waiting to find out with the secret police if there was a case pending against me. When it was denied I got

back the passports he had confiscated after a bodily examination . In the face of the urgency of my mission I was determined to reach my destination. In order to avoid the same border crossing I made a northern detour to arrive at Basle from another direction. Yet changing trains didn't help much. The SS-men inspected here also the identification-cards ,first within the compartments while the incoming passengers had to line up side by side and wait for the control before entering the train. I tried a coup. I stood as the first in line facing the entrance of the first car behind the locomotive. A woman leaned out of the window. I stepped forward and asked whether the men had inspected her car. She affirmed it and added that the control of the whole train would be finished any moment. I answered: "O-K, if your car is inspected I may as well enter." With these words I gave a jump and I was within. I was lucky that nobody denounced me.

After my arrival at the waiting room of the German -Swiss station I phoned my good friend that I was there with the passports. He arrived in short time and was startled hearing the story of my delay. Sunday, the first of October was set as the day to comply with the requirement of the Dominican Consulate and sign all necessary immigration-papers at the presence of a Swiss attorney who also was a notary. It had to be done , I was told, on Swiss ground for the sake of the attorney and by reason of upholding the fiction that we resided in Switzerland. My friend destroyed my doubts that it couldn't be done and assured me of a good outcome.

I had not revealed to dear Florli the cause of my recent activity. But now it could be told since it entitled us to some hope of success. We had reason enough to be joyful and awaited eagerly the Sunday afternoon. Since on Sunday, was no nazi inspection, we arrived safely at the well-known waiting room, about two o'clock. There we met many Jewish people using the nice place for their respective conferences. One after the other left, and finally we were the only ones sitting there and waiting. Shortly after 3.30 p.m. we noticed an auto coming to a halt before the entrance of the building, leading to the Swiss part of the railroad station . Two dignified gentlemen with brief-cases under their arms got out and entered the building. They surely could pass for representatives of an emigration-committee as they assumed to be. The one of them was our

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agent and the other one was the attorney and notary, a son of the Rabbi of Basle who had married us. We were called to enter the Swiss office of the passport control. The German surveyor followed us. But the Swiss officer met him and asked: "What do you want here?" The German answered: "I have to watch these people." The Swiss officer said sharply: "You have nothing to watch on Swiss soil; we don't need you for that purpose here. Return at once to your designated place!" And he did without saying one word. It stands to reason that we were happy to get rid of that German-Nazi as a witness. The questionnaire about our immigration to Santo Domingo was quickly completed and then signed by all of us. We were thankful and happy and all the more when we were told that the Consul - general would issue the visas in the current week. As a matter of fact he did issue the visas five days later on the 6th of October. It was the day of Simchas-Torah. We returned to Lörrach making a small detour via the town of Weil known as a wine growing district. We had time enough before our train was due, to pause at a garden restaurant and drink a glass of wine to celebrate the progress of our emigration. By the way, Jews were not served anymore at restaurants. But we as strangers in the little town and cheerful as we were we didn't mind.

In preparation for our voyage we needed a few more visas. One for Switzerland and one for Italy as a permit to pass without delay through the respective territories in order to reach the port of Genoa (Italy) for our embarkation. The ship-broker in Basle, representing the Italian Navigation-Society had confidently booked our ocean passage on the steamer "Conte Grande", leaving Tuesday, 17 Oct. '37. The Italian line had no direct course to the port of Santo Domingo. We had to change boats for that reason at the port of La Guaira in the state of Venezuela. Therefore one more visa was necessary as a transit permit. Our friendly Swiss broker read the statutes of Venezuela and found that the permit to embark for Santo Domingo will be issued without further ceremony at the consulate general of Venezuela when we arrived in Genoa as our port of exit. That sounded good enough -- nothing to worry about.

My immediate task was now to procure for us the Italian and Swiss transit permits. I left Wednesday night by train and arrived on the next morning at Frankfurt/Main, the seat of the Italian

consulate. The consul, a friendly man, complied at once with my request and issued a visa for 24 hours prior to our embarkment on 17th of October, with entry to Italy over the Brenner pass at the German-Italian boundary. On my appeal that we resided very near to Switzerland and wished to enter Italy rather at the Swiss-Italian frontier, he did not object. He said, as soon as we had obtained the Swiss transit he would <sup>via telephone</sup> authorize by phone his colleague in Basel to change the visas according to our wishes. The Swiss consulate was located at Mannheim, a large industrial city.

~~It was too late to arrive in time to find that consulate still~~ open. I used the afternoon to pay a visit to a nice couple, relatives of Florli. He had been a high school professor for several decades and was forced by the nazis to retire. His son, their only child, had emigrated to England. The petition of the good old teacher to live with his wife in Switzerland was denied. No Jews! Both were later deported and perished by nazi atrocities. At about 11 pm. I groped along the pitch-dark streets to find my way to the railroad station. In fear of an enemy air-raid the city was blacked out. In the forenoon of Friday I arrived at Mannheim and went to the office of the Swiss Consul general. The big "J" printed in red ink on the first page of my passport decided at once my request in the prejudiced mind of this anti-Jewish official. He indicated that the Swiss government had resolved to refuse the entry of Jews because they enter under false pretence contrary to their assertion. Even a transit permit of 24 hours was out of question although I showed him my tickets for the boat, leaving Genoa on Tuesday. I returned with the next train to Lörrach. I had suffered a sad <sup>and complete</sup> frustration in our cause since we had absolutely no other choice to leave Germany.

As a last resort we could try to obtain the precious permission from the frontier police of Basle. The question <sup>with the</sup> if the Swiss police inspector would grant us the permit to stay for 24 hours to use the railroad to reach the Swiss-Italian border-city of Chiasso disturbed us all night. I was pretty sure that the Italian consul in Basle would co-operate with us by validating Chiasso as the place to enter Italy. But the presumption was valid only on the premises that the Swiss authority yielded to our request. There was no time to waste if we wanted to embark on Tuesday.

To solve the puzzle, our dear Hannele, as our most precious emissary, left early Saturday morning to confer with our agent. He was well known in Basle and at the moment the only man who was able to help us in our critical situation. The result of our good man's effort would be given to us by phone. In the meantime Flori and I could do nothing but sitting there beside the packed up baggage and wait and hope and pray. Since it was Shabbos Rosh ha-chodesh, it was the first of the month Cheshwan 5700, or the 14th of October 1939. I said the prayers relative to the day and then read the side Noah. About noontime a neighbor whom we had asked before, to do us this favor if there would be a call from Basle for us, came now running to summon us to his phone. Flori responded very fast and was back within five minutes - - all smiling. Everything was settled satisfactorily for us. We had now the 24 hour visa for the passage through Switzerland as well as the corrected Italian visa issued by the Italian Consulate in Basle to enter Italia at the Swiss border in Chiasso. We were, thanks Heaven, jubilant that we had won the day.

We left Lörrach by train a quarter before 2 p.m. and stood 15 minutes later on the platform of the German side of the railroad station in Basle. Our dear daughter, happy and rightly proud like a champion, awaited us to hand over our corrected passport, as we passed first the German - then the Swiss custom house officials. On both sides a smooth and speedy dispatching. The Swiss permit was granted by the police inspectorate as a transit without stay. The police was even alert to report back to Basle as soon as we left Switzerland. We passed the Saturday afternoon and the night with friends who had invited us. After the end of Shabbat I paid a visit to our agent to thank him and to pay the promised commission. Then we parted like old friends. Early on Sunday morning, accompanied by many friends, we set forward by train to reach the Italian border. We arrived at Chiasso at about 10 p.m. . At the passenger control the Italian officer would curiously not permit us to enter Italia before the beginning of the next day, in order not to extend our stay over 24 hours. How ridiculously can people act in Jewish affairs. We took lodging in a hotel and continued our journey at 4.30 on Monday morning.

We arrived via Milano in Genoa about 9 o'clock a.m. At our



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arrival we were greeted by a number of hotelporters to get customers. For some inexplicable reason I waived the offer of the first one but agreed to the next porter. This decision was of great importance in the fateful events which were about to occur. We were of good cheer and followed our man to a modest hotel. The owner had even some knowledge of the German language. Together with the porter <sup>and</sup> who directed us, we set off to see the consul general of Venezuela. What was supposed to be a formality in the opinion of our honest Swiss ship-broker in ~~Basle~~ <sup>Basle</sup> turned out as a nightmare for us. It came about that the consul <sup>acted</sup> ~~acted~~ contrary to the ordinance of his country when he refused to give a 24 hour transit visa although the port of La Guaira was ~~the~~ the only direct start to reach San Domingo.. But the consul did not want to hear or see us. He only stared with all signs of disgust at the big red "J" in the passports and closing ~~the~~ the window with a bang he cried that "this is an impossible race !" He turned his back on us and let us stand dumfounded and perplexed. The hatred against the Jews revived by the Germans in pure culture swirled apparently like a virus around the world. We returned to our hotel very downhearted and disillusioned. From where could we expect salvation ?

The next port of call on the steamer's voyage would be Cristobal ~~City~~ in the Republic of Panama. Why not try our luck there ? I spoke to our hotel keeper about our sorrows. When I mentioned that it may be perhaps possible to get a visa for a stay in Panama, he told me that to his knowledge it were necessary to have an interpreter because the Consul general of Panama and his secretary are newcomers in the City and speak only Spanish. Our host was friendly enough to call by phone the office of the Jewish congregation and in explaining the urgency he asked to provide us with an interpreter speaking German and Spanish. After a short interval the secretary of the congregation phoned that he was unable to find such a man. Now we were really in trouble. Although the idea was <sup>very</sup> ~~very~~ to transfer via Panama but at least there was a ray of hope and that seemed to be lost too.

It was near 1 o'clock at noon. We sat down in the dining room ; most of the guests had finished their lunch. We were in a sad plight and tears dropped in the soup, ~~we~~ we had ordered, by the thought that our emigration-plans had dissolved like glittering bubbles. I noticed

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a man sitting complacently alone at a table not far from us before a bottle of wine and smoking a cigar-but made as a specialty in Switzerland. The Swiss dialect spoken by Florli and Hannele attracted his attention. He approached our table and inquired politely about the reason of our sadness. When he learned our story he grew really angry. he said: "That remains to be seen if there is not a place left in the world where you too have the right to live. The cruel treatment you have experienced at home and abroad is revolting to me." He explained that he speaks fluently Spanish as an old South-American resident born in Switzerland. He would of course accompany me to the Panamanian consulate. We left at once. Florli and Hannele remained at the hotel.

At our arrival we found the secretary alone in the office. The Consul-General had caught a cold and was confined to the room of his apartment situated on the same floor. Our newly won <sup>advocate</sup> with the name Brodbeck, pleaded eloquently for us. The secretary listened patiently. On his desk lay the mail neatly unfolded before him; just arrived as it seemed to me and ready for discussion with the consul. Now he lifted up the letter on top of the mail and presented it tacitly to our Swiss <sup>advocate</sup>. As he read it he grew pale as if frightened to the utmost. And so was I when he translated the letter to me. It was the strict order of the government of the Republic of Panama directed to all consulates abroad to stop immediately the issue of visas to the Jews. From now on visas are exclusively reserved for tourists who travel for pleasure only. It was further expressly stated that Jews do not count to this category. It was our bad luck that the order had to arrive just on this day. It was a crushing disappointment. Was everything already lost? With little hope in my heart I ventured the suggestion if we could not submit our plight to the consul himself. Our good friend agreed with me at once. He said: "That is right! We have to see the consul. We want to hear his judgment." The secretary, willing to listen to the interpreter, pressed the electric bell whereupon a boy entered the office dressed nicely as a bellboy. The secretary handed him a slip of paper and two minutes later there was the consul standing at the desk. He was well wrapped up in woolen comforters and wore felt shoes. Our advocate spoke with persuasion stirred with compassion as if he had to save a defendant from the scaffold. As he

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had finished his pleading there was silence. Without saying a word the secretary handed over to the consul with a light bow and smile the ominous, governmental order. I had fixed my eyes on the consul's face and observed him while he stared at the letter -- or did he read it? I saw with astonishment as he put it carefully back on top of the mail where it was before. Then he addressed a few words to the secretary and turned to leave the office. He had not closed completely the door behind him when I asked: "What did the consul say?" It was translated to me as follows: "I have no time to read the mail right now. I shall do so later. Please execute the visas." Thanks to Heaven. We were released from a dreadful fate. I shudder to think about what could have happened to us if we had arrived with the next boat that was scheduled for four weeks later.

The secretary thought three days sufficient to change the boats while I would have liked rather a stay of seven days. Our good Swiss considered even that not enough and asked for 30 days because we should take the opportunity to do some sightseeing. I was more than lucky that the visas were granted and I said: we all should be content with seven days. But our advocate very proud of our success insisted that we ask the consul again to decide in this case also while the secretary objected to such a long time. The same procedure as before brought the consul back to the office. The hearing was very short and ended with one word from the good consul and that meant "Granted!". It proved to be later of lucky consequences. Then my friend left, his job well done!

Making ready the passports, the secretary tried to explain that in consideration of the length of time it was necessary to deposit the amount of 500.-\$ repayable when leaving the country of Panama. That was nearly all the money I possessed. There was no time to argue and I did as the secretary told me. I had to go by taxi-cab to the National Bank of Italy and exchange the money for a draft. I had the amount in American dollars procured by my ship-broker in Basle and of course I wanted it in the same denomination. But opposed to it was the bank-official on grounds of the Italian exchange control. The Italian lire was fast deteriorating and I didn't wish to be the loser. It was quite an argument with the executive of the bank going forth and back between us with the help of a German interpreter before it was agreed upon in my favor. Then I hurried back to the consulate by taxi where I received our completed

*x out of the sale of furniture exported with paid permission in Germany*

passports and returned to the office building of the Italian Navigation Society.

Florli and Hannele were anxiously waiting for me. However the dispatching of the passengers did not start before the evening and our turn was at midnight. The officials would check the passports and exchange the preliminary certificates of the ship-brokers for the company's tickets. That was supposed to be all. Since I had the visas for our country of destination at Santo Domingo and a transit visa to disembark at Christobal-Colon everything seemed to me for the best. But not for the navigation-company's official. He bluntly refused to recognize the correctness of the visas of the Republica Dominicana. He explained that a special permit of debarkation issued by the government itself was required and the alleged deposit of the landing tax with the Dominican consulate in Switzerland was for this reason insufficient. After a day of great excitement this new obstacle on our way of emigration was too much for me. It really upset me. Through a German interpreter I explained that the visas for Santo Domingo were prepared by the Consul general in Switzerland according to the immigration laws of the Dominican Republic. This was precisely pointed out in our passports as I showed him. The mainpoint which we have to be concerned about was in my opinion the transit-visa to stay in Panama and that was fully secured by the visa of the Panamanian consul general. The Italian officer retorted that the inspector of immigration <sup>in Panama</sup> would not overlook the deficiency of the Dominican visas and then we would be a charge on the Italian steamer. I told him to forget his worries about our landing in Santo Domingo and give us the green light for Panama where we have 30 days time to contact the Dominican consulate in Switzerland on this matter if necessary. After this heated argument the manager of the Italian company finally handed over to us the tickets. At two o'clock in the morning we returned to our quarters of the hotel. Indeed - - what an eventful day had passed for us.

On Tuesday the 17th of October 1939 about 7 o'clock in the evening the liner "Conte Grande" cleared the port of Genoa in Italy. We had a marvellous view of the City illuminated by thousands of lights. But the most magnificent view was the unforgettable wonder of the nocturnal firmament with all the stars spread above us. Under sounds of a band on shore playing the well known melody "muss ich denn zum ~~Schiff~~ hinaus" (must I then go from the

( City) And the liner reached the open sea. There were in my estimate about thousand emigrants; nearly all of them were bound for one of the contries in South America. It was our first voyage and our interest was captured by the wonders of the vast ocean. Accommodation and catering on the boat were defective. But as third class passengers we were content to be on board, after all. The course of our liner went westerly, passed by from afar the port of Marseille in France, and went on to our first port of call at the city of Barcelona /Spain. From there we passed the Balearic Islands with Menorca and Mallorca. From there we reached the Strait of Gibraltar and leaving behind the Mediterranean Sea we sailed into the Atlantic Ocean. The Canary Islands west of North Africa with the port of Las Palmas was another stop of our boat. Then we continued by good weather our voyage, and passing the Antilles Islands, we entered the Caribbean Sea where the liner headed for the port of La Guaira-Caracas of Venezuela/South America. With the next port of call at Christobal-Colon in Panama /Central America we reached our port of destination.

( It was on Wednesday, the first of November 1939 in the late afternoon. The Captain of the Port, who was likewise the Chief of the registration office, for foreigners, examined the passports, aided by an official of the steamer who served as a German interpreter. When it was our turn the Captain checked the passport and especially the visas. He found them apparently all right and put them aside. Then he wanted to know how much cash we possessed. That was for us a startling question. The refugees were permitted to take only a small allowance of 2.4 \$ per person out of the country. A friend of Florly in Basle had voluntarily contributed 25.-3 as a fare well. The money destined for our livelihood had to be deposited with the Consulate of Panama in Genoa. Upon the captain's request I put exactly 32.503 on the table and that was all. He was astonished and said with contempt: "How long can three adults live on such a small amount of money?" I asked if the world did not learn about the fate of the German Jews who were forced to abandon their possession. The Captain answered: "The German Reich(State) can not expect that the robbed and banished German citizens turn a charge of the public welfare of the Republic of Panama. You and your family will be taken back to Germany." We were alarmed to the utmost. In unmistakable terms I asserted very firmly that no Jew is allowed to return

to Germany or he will be confined in a concentration-camp . I was once there and nobody can force me for a second time into the same calamity. We are well educated ,we have a profession ,we are healthy and we can take care of ourselves. We three together repeated energettically that we never will return to Germany where we are faced with the danger of torture and murder. In all the excitement I remembered suddenly that I got, upon my request, a receipt of my deposit at the Consulate of Genoa written on a slip of paper. I found it in one of my pockets and gave it to the Captain. Then everything turned out to be all right. The Captain accepted in full the visas of the Panamanian Consulate at Genoa although Jewish immigration was strictly prohibited . Lucky after all, and we left the liner. There we were standing on dry land again. We had no great choice to find a vacancy in Colon. The summoned taxi-cab driver of a buggy with horse took us around for quite a while till we found a joint with lodgings appropriate to our means. We had to be very careful with our expenses to make both ends meet. I suggested on the next day that we subsist on bananas only. These are in Panama abundantly produced and are very cheap, but they are nourishing too. However, the thoughts depressed me that I had brought the situation about because I had hesitated much too long to emigrate from Germany and - - had nearly failed. It was a relief for me and I have to be grateful that Florli made light of the discomfort and was as cheerful as our good and beloved Daughter who did not mind at all.

The next day we endeavored to find out about the course to Santo Domingo. we learned that there is virtually none but that we could go by steamer to Port-au Prince the capital of the Republic of Haiti situated on the western part of the Haiti Island. From there one had to travel by bus to the eastern part of it to reach Santo Domingo in the Dominican Republic. For the voyage came only a French steamer in question . The manager whom we visited in his expensive office declared brusquely that the French navigation company has rejected all Jews as passengers because the Jews carry too many times faulty passports. With this rigid decision given to us by the ship's agency it became obvious that we would not be able to leave Panama at the time of the expiration of our visas on the first of December. Therefore we consulted an advisory board set up by immigrants and headed by a former attorney of Vienna/Austria. We related to him the plight of our emigration and mentioned also that we were in

possession of the copies of two affidavits for the U.S.A. After hearing our story he advised us to take the affidavits to the American Consul General residing at Colon. He said: "Let the consul tell you about your waiting period ! It is quite different whether you are in Germany or residing abroad. We thanked him for his advice and proceeded to pick out from our trucks in the storage house the documents. Then we went straight to the consulate where we were told after we presented our affidavits that indeed German quota numbers will be available for us within the next few months for the immigration to the United States. We surely had all reason to be jubilant about the news. By the way, our learned dear Florli was able to converse in English with the consul.

The urgent task before us was now to secure the prolongation of our visas. For this purpose I travelled to Panama City, the capital of Panama, to pay a visit to the governmental department of immigration. I arrived early in the morning and since I had time enough, it occurred to me to call first on the counsellor of immigration affairs set up by German newcomers. He listened to my project carefully and examined our passports with our Panamanian visas. He was astonished looking at them and exclaimed: "How did you manage to enter Panama at all since the doors were closed to Jewish immigration several weeks before you arrived? But never mind. The main-point is : you are here. Now I advise you strongly to return at once to Colon and petition there the captain anew to prolong the visas of your passports. The good man agreed with your immigration at your arrival although he was well aware that the entry of Jews was forbidden. What does he care now ? He did it once and he will do it again and again if necessary. I have no doubt about it. He is the captain of the port and supervisor of the foreigners. In the city of Colon is such a man<sup>^</sup>king. He can do as it pleases him - - - but only if he does not get orders from the Government. Then you have lost a good friend who may be willing to help you again. By going to the office of the Government you may encounter a too eager official and you achieve the contrary of your wish. Such a man is capable to order the captain to expell you from the country on the day the visas expire, aggravated by the fact that that you were admitted apparently by an oversight. Return home! good-bye and good luck." I never will forget this wise, friendly and benevolent character. On my return I informed Florli and Hannele about the

strange outcome of my mission to the <sup>govt.</sup> government. We saw clearly that we had avoided a big mistake. Therefore we concluded thankfully to follow on the next day the advice given to us. And how right Mr. Meier from Halberstadt /Germany was. It turned out exactly in the way it was predicted to me. The Captain prolonged our visas for another 30 days without much ado, like a routine in his daily work. Our residence permit was even more secured when later the American Consul wrote on behalf of us to the captain of the port affirming that we would leave Panama in about 3-4 months. A lucky turn of marvelous events had occurred to all of us. We could relax for the first time on our wandering.

In April 1939 I had transferred via Switzerland a certain amount of American dollars, as mentioned before, to Havana, the capital of Cuba which was required of the emigrants by the Government. But all of a sudden the gates to Jewish immigration were closed and we could not make use of it. Cuba did not pay back the deposit made by the poor refugees. Fortunately I had deposited the money cautiously in a great American bank with branches abroad. There was one in Havana as well as in Colon. Upon my request the money was transmitted at my disposal to Colon. Now we were well off. We moved to better quarters which we shared with a married couple of Germany. We abandoned our banana-board and returned to our customary meals which dear Florli prepared. We enjoyed our stay in Panama. However, the tropical heat was not wholesome for Florli in the longer course of time.

A weekly periodical edited in New York by former journalists from Germany eagerly read by the refugees kept us informed about the events in the United States as well as in the world around us. In the January edition we read that Germany had closed her part of the railroad station as a terminal in Basel on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1939. It had come about only 2½ months after we had left. In the following month the sad news reached us that 700 families from Stettin and surroundings had been deported to Poland. It had happened during the night between the 12th and 13th of February 1940. Among them was my brother and his wife. The catastrophe of the Jews as a new chapter in the history of Jewish tragedies weighed profoundly on the mind of all of us. The "free" world had failed largely in apathy and complacency to respond to the call of help,

cry for



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as long as time was favorable. . After that in the progress of the war it was first too little and now it was too late.

In the last week of March 1940 we were summoned to the office of the American Consul General. He announced that the originals of our affidavits had arrived from Germany and that quota numbers for German immigrants were also available. We received our passports with the American visas longingly awaited, on the 16th of March. We remembered with thanks the obliging and polite attention on the part of the American Consulate. The deposit made hastily at the Panamanian consulate in Genoa was paid back in full to us. We booked for the voyage on the liner "City of Baltimore" belonging to the United States Company, New York, and sailed on the 6th of April from the harbor of Balboa/Panama via Acapulco./Mexico and Los Angeles Harbor/California to our destination, the City of San Francisco. We arrived on Tuesday, the 16th of April 1940 and were greeted by a former business friend of Germany to whom we had announced our arrival. We took lodging at a private boarding house managed by German refugees. A week later we celebrated significantly enough the holidays of Pesach.

The city of San Francisco fascinated us. The whole area of this world-famous metropolis captured our attention and filled us with joy. There was the ocean and the Bay with the "Golden Gate" bridge leading to the Marin district with its surrounding mountains and there was the Bay-Bridge, connecting San Francisco with the cities of Berkeley and Oakland. The well known Golden Gate park of San Francisco within easy reach invited us to a comfortable walk. The first weeks were a well deserved holiday in this beautiful city in California. To us newcomers and refugees it is understandable that we imagined to live in a paradise. But could we really afford it to live at our young age" of 50 years old as pensioners? With regard to our later years we had to come to terms how we could integrate ourselves into the American life. Florli suggested that we should abandon the expensive boarding house, rent a small furnished apartment, and set up our own household. We found suitable for our purpose a modest apartment at the 8th Avenue in the Richmond district. With dear Florli as a thrifty housekeeper we all were well off and satisfied. Hannele visited for a short time the "Continuation school" till she became of age. We got acquainted with a man from Switzerland who was a semi-

retired tailor of ladies' dresses, a <sup>somewhat</sup> queer bachelor. He was <sup>anxious</sup> to find for Florli a domestic job as a cook with a well to do family and for Hannele a place in a lady's dress store. I visited daily a public school to learn the English language. After six weeks I gave up because the progress was too slow and I continued rather on my own with an intense study at home. Since our original immigration country was the Dominican Republic I <sup>studied</sup> busied myself while still in Germany with the Spanish language only. By the way, I am glad to report that the Consul General in Switzerland of the just mentioned Republic refunded to us on my request the considerable immigration tax deposited as a precaution in Switzerland.

Pretty soon we entered in a vivid correspondence with our dear Son in England. Our sole aim was to bring him to America. But all our endeavor was doomed to failure: Red tape proved to be an insurmountable barrier. After the collapse of the West front in France, May 1940, the Nazis prepared for the invasion of England by an intensified war on the sea and especially by terrific air-raids. The German refugees were hastily shipped off to Canada and Australia. Our communication with Max was interrupted. We could not know his fate. These were the days of greatest anxiety for us. In these crucial days the headlines of our daily paper confirmed the rumor about a torpedoed English boat off the coast of Canada. We were extremely dismayed. Yet we could do nothing but wait, hope, and pray. Finally the letter from Max we had longed for arrived with the happy news that his ship has securely landed in Canada. There all the refugees were interned near Quebec for the time being.

The deported Jews of Stettin in February 1940 were settled as captives and slave workers in villages of the district of Lublin Poland. The Polish country was subdued in September 1939 by nazi invasion and kept under nazi administration.

There is nothing to fear on earth but that brutal beast we call man or in our case with the synonym "nazi." My Brother had entered the first world war as a volunteer. Now he was treated worse than a mean criminal. The hate against the Jews planted and inflated within the German people needed only a small urge either for religious, social, economical, political or any other purpose, bred in the sick nazi brains, to give incitement to persecution and to the performance of nearly unimaginable crimes. This times, as pointed out before, a brutal maniac chosen as the leader of

first cable Erlon that he is in Canada (P)  
 first cable Erlon that he is in Canada (P)



Germany had thrown the spark in the powder barrel. It was now impossible to rescue the victims from the ensuing explosion and the devouring flames. The deportation of the Jews to Poland in predetermined intervals not only from Germany but from other European countries also, which the nazi war machine could easily overturn, was the prelude of the planned extermination as the "final solution". All we could do was to send continuously victuals to Poland to stave off the famine. Furthermore I made abundantly use of a provision which permitted Jews abroad to distribute a certain monthly amount of money to needy Jews still in Germany. In this way I could support my brother's parents in law and their children and my brother and his wife also. But since the nazis took every three months the big special tax charged upon the Jews which were declared stateless, my money dwindled fast.

When we arrived in America we encountered a force of more than nine millions of unemployed workers. It was the aftermath of one of the longest depression which had begun in 1929. For this reason it was all but impossible to find work for people over 50 years of age. I ventured a business of my own. The credit system plays a very large part in the economy of this country. I made use of it by investing in an apartment building a small downpayment and became the managing owner. The maintenance and the monthly payments of interest on a big mortgage did not make it a profitable business. We earned a free apartment for ourselves and had even a small income provided that all apartments were rented. We moved in on the first of April 1941. I worked daily from Monday through Friday as a janitor and handyman, or, caused by the flux of the tenants, frequently as painter of the apartment just vacant. There was a big competition on the rental market and the upkeep played an important rôle.

On Sunday, the 7th of December 1941 occurred a crushing event which influenced profoundly the life of every American citizen and the events of the war at large. It was the malicious Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. A couple of days later America entered as an ally the war. We stood at the beginning of a gigantic struggle in this second world war that could have been avoided. But by the complacency of the concerned nations, like France, England and America, and by a ridiculous stupidity and gullibility they all were fooled too easily by the lies and deceit of that maniacal

furious of Germany. The "leading" states men in the world had closed their eyes in face of the signs of warning set up by the Germans themselves that could be clearly understood as unmistakable war preparations. Let us remember some of them. There was in the beginning of 1933 the conversion of the German democracy to the autocracy of dictatorship. In the following year there were the bloody purges against their own men of rank, then the setting up of the Secret State Police, the so-called Gestapo, with the whole paraphernalia of tyranny and further more the formation of the criminal SS-troups and among other cruelties the erection of the murderous concentration-camps. Then the declaration of nullity of the peace-treaty of 1920 and following defiantly with the occupation of the neutral Rheinland-zone in 1936. The annexation of the Sudetenlands and of Austria followed 1938. Only about a decade ago the mere proposal of the German Republic to unite Germany and Austria by a customs union only was declared by France as a cause of war. Now, since Austria was even swallowed up by the nazis, everybody kept silent. The Germans hid under a camouflage made to order for dumbfounded state leaders, pretending that the building of a tremendous army was aimed solely against aggression of communist Russia. To the surprise of those who always live in a dream from yesterday and don't understand the present, the German furious-maniac concluded a treaty with just that regime of Russia, August 1939. Two rascals of first degree had joint hands. The treaty was a fabric of pure make-believe resting on fraud and lie. And then the bomb exploded to the biggest surprise of the "great" states men in Europe and United States of America. On the twenty - second of June 1941 the nazis in haughty confidence in their terrible forces of colossal dimensions invaded Russia. The 2nd world war ended 8th of May 1945 with a catastrophe for Germany and with the greatest tragedy in the history of the Jews. The war was won by the allies but, alas, the peace remained aloof.

With the 7th of December 1941 all communications with Germany and with the deported Jews in occupied Poland was suddenly cut off. One of the last letters we received from our relatives reported that Erica, the wife of my Brother, had died on the infection of spotted fever. My Brother also was taken with the same disease since three weeks. His existence remained like that of all the other

prisoners a struggle hovering between life and death. The last ray of hope in my Brother's survival was gone. They all were doomed to perish either by a natural cause in consequence of starvation, hard labor, torture, disease or by straight murder. It stands without emphasis that my mind was deeply depressed. There was no consolation being a Jew in an American congregation. Years passed before these martyrs were even mentioned at the Gikzor/memorial service.

After the removal of the Jews from Stettin <sup>then were</sup> two more deportations in the same year 1940. In March the Jews east of the Oder-river were carried off to Poland, and in October all Jews living in Baden and adjacent districts were forcibly taken to Gurs at the foot of the Pyrenees near the Spanish border in France occupied by the nazi invaders. In San Francisco a committee was formed for the task to ship victuals and clothing to our former country people. It functioned well but had to cease in December 1941 when the war became a total world war. The rage of the nazis against the Jews went on henceforth with increasing brutality. The Jewish population of the western parts of Germany were also deported. Among them our relatives residing in Frankfurt -Main. In January 1942 the devilish executives of the nazi regime met at Wannsee, a suburb of Berlin, and decreed the extermination of the whole European Jewry. It was called the "final solution". Several camps of annihilation with huge gas chambers were built in Poland. The largest of them in Auschwitz. One of the camps most cruel commanders was the same bestial creature I became acquainted with while I was kept at Dachau.

In the beginning of 1942 a letter arrived from my aunt Hedwig, a widow of my uncle Franz, a brother of my father, announcing her imminent deportation to Poland. Further a short communication of the relatives -in-law of my brother given through the Red Cross informed me about their deportation, too. It was at that time when the terror of war surged back and forth over Poland wedged between Germany and Russia. One could lose his mind trying to grasp the suffering to which the Jewish victims were exposed.

The sad story of the tragedy of European Jewry was currently related to us in America through the news agencies abroad from neutral countries like Switzerland, Sweden, Portugal and others. The President of the United States warned in a speech broadcast

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to the world that the perpetrators of the crime against humanity would be held responsible at the end of the war. Mr. President: When it still was time for a comprehensive action the cry for help fell on deaf ears. It was a superfluous gesture, It had no influence on nazi Germany. The Pope as the elect deputy of Christ and the spiritual leader of more than 500 Millions adherents in the world kept silent altogether. The display of moral courage was none of his affairs, Jews were excluded as human beings in his sacred catechism. Nevertheless many Catholics helped to rescue Jewish refugees in France and Italy even with the consent of the Vatican in some cases - - mostly when the Jews turned to apostasy - - naturally.

The impact of the war on this country was immense. First of all America had to rebuild the armed forces and speed up the production of war equipment. That demanded the employment of an army of workers in the factories and in the shipyards. The inflated wages enticed tens of thousands of men and women to follow the urgent call. The problem of unemployment was solved overnight. Non-citizens were excluded. They were considered to be aliens and had to register as such and were fingerprinted. Pretty soon all Japanese were summoned and interned in camps. There was a strong public demand that the refugees of Germany had to suffer the same treatment for the sake of the country's security. The sole thought of internment caused us to shiver. Nobody could say for sure whether it would happen or not. It was the election year of a new governor of California. When he declared on his platform that he would remove all aliens from the west coast if he was chosen, we resolved upon to leave California. Thereby we were uprooted before we could settle down.

In May 1942 we moved to the middle West to stay in St. Paul / Minnesota, a couple of thousand miles from the west coast. At our arrival we were welcomed by the Weillers and invited to lodge at their home. Mr. Weiller, a well to do cattle dealer, had won over one of his friends to provide for us an affidavit. He was aroused to it by one of Florli's friends from Lörrach; she was related to Mr. Weiller and now acted as a mediatrix. Long ago the Weiller family had immigrated from Switzerland. Mrs. Weiller was a kind-hearted lady; she was blind since many years. They lived in a roomy home, liked to give parties, and have people around them. Our lodging with the Weillers could be only temporary of course. St. Paul the capital of Minnesota was in comparison with San Francisco rather

a dull city. Mr. Weiller's plan to procure for me a job in a large printing plant failed.

There was not too far away the big industrial city of St. Louis/Mo. It was alluring to me to travel to that place and look for a job. The deficiency in the English language prohibited me from making use of my commercial knowledge as a bookkeeper or other office work apart from the low salary they were paid. It was better to make use of being mechanically inclined and skilful at any factory work - trained to it in my own printing plant in Germany. St. Louis is related to the big city of Chicago with its versatile activity in nearly all commercial and industrial enterprises. A major segment of 'St. Louis' business was in Jewish possession and the Jews held conspicuous positions in many of commercial and manufacturing establishments. I am sorry to say that I found the greatest reluctance among the Jews to hire Jewish refugees. I was very disappointed. Furthermore there was another setback for me. It was everywhere in the state of Missouri the rule that Saturday was included as a regular workday. I had kept my business closed on Shabbath in the old country in honor of the loftiest element in Jewish religion. To make a living I wouldn't have objected if it had been the exception or limited to a certain season but not as a permanent way of life.

I returned to St. Paul. Florli was very busy at the Weiller's house and Hannele had found a place to work. We decided to look about for a lodging and for work for myself in the neighboring city of Minneapolis across the river Mississippi. We were eager to shorten the time of our residence at Weiller's and hastily we put our savings in an apartment house. It was a burden for the next 27 months for us when we sold it again. We were lucky to get our money back. In February 1945 we rented a nice apartment in a double flat building enjoying our privacy. Hannele had found a profitable place in a wholesale factory where she learned the cutting of dresses quite as a profession. Florli worked hard in a major hotel as a room maid. I took over the job as a cardboard cutter and occasionally worked at a punch machine. It was a printing plant and a cardboard box factory. The work put a great strain on my physical strength. It was by the time too much for me handling very heavy cardboard loads for nine hours every day except Saturday and Sunday. Moreover the wages were low since I was paid only as an auxiliary worker. There was no encouragement on the part of my boss. He was

a Jew and his parents had been immigrants ,too, but he had no sympathy for a refugee. On his daily inspection -tour through the plant he spoke many times a friendly word to the one or the other of my co-workers but ignored me *conspicuously*. In summer 1944 I had my first vacation of one week. There was a vacancy in the building. The rooms called badly for a painting job. I worked from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. to finish the re-decorating as soon as possible. When I returned to my job I was completely overworked. I had to give up and could not be swerved in my decision despite the urgent plea of my forman and the boss himself. After a short time of rest I found another job in a calendar factory likewise as a cutter. The job was easier to handle and the wages per week were nearly doubled. From the Union of printers and paper workers I received a diploma as a journeyman.

Our dear Son Max was an ambitious boy who used his time wisely preparing for the graduation that enabled him to enter the university. There was a decree of the Canadian government at that time that students could be released from the internment camp on the grounds of a sponsorship by a Canadian citizen. To our help came Mr. Weiller again. He was well acquainted with a business friend residing at Winnipeg-Canada and on Mr. Weiller's recommendation the Canadian sponsored Max's release. Thereupon Max moved to Winnipeg and entered in that city the university with the aim to obtain his bachelor degree of arts. Foreign languages was his main course. He mingled freely with the Jewish congregation and always showed great interest in Jewish affairs. To spur his knowledge of the Hebrew language I wrote as his birthday present fifty lectures of the *elementaries* of the Hebrew grammar and transmitted to him one lecture every week. I don't know how good it was for him but according to an old saying it is not as it is taught but as it is caught from your well meaning and action. From our correspondence during his time in Canada I kept some letters, too precious to destroy which reveal strikingly great human values which signify solemnly his character. I may note further that it was in my judgment an extraordinary achievement to acquire on the small base of his schooling in Germany the necessary knowledge to win the admission to the university and follow up its curriculum. The least we could do was to contribute to his sustenance to show our respect and admiration. Not only dear Mutti helped in the worthy cause but our dear Hannele



also showed many times in cold cash her warm sisterly love.

The life in Minneapolis was monotonous. There was not much beauty neither in the city nor in its surroundings. The middle West has seasons with a short and hot summer and with a long and very cold winter time. Then we thought longingly of San Francisco. It is worth mentioning that we enjoyed many pleasant evenings at Weiller's home where we were often friendly invited. There we met a number of refugees. But in a short time one after the other had left the city. In April 1945 we were five years in the United States. We were now entitled to visit a special school as preparative ~~for~~ the citizenship examination. After three months of schooling all three of us passed exceedingly well. About 90 days later, on 12th of September 1945 we received with great joy our citizenship papers. The unpleasant<sup>ly</sup> condition of being stateless and aliens was erased. We were now once more "normal" people as honest citizen of a great <sup>country</sup> state. Our dear ~~Florli~~<sup>Florie</sup> was selected to give at the farewell-party the valedictory address and knowing our dear Florlichen, you readily imagine how good she was; everyone of the audience applauded heartily and meant it that way. We belonged to the first group to be sworn in as new citizens in a time of peace again. The war in Europe was concluded on the 8th of May 1945 by the capitulation of Germany and was followed by Japan on the second of September. A terrible epoch in our life-time was brought to an end.

Shortly after the armistice with Germany we received from Bertl, Florli's sister, the first mail since December 1941. We were shaken to learn that her husband Lucien, a gentle and compassionate man, was seized during a Nazi raid with the help of the French police in March 1944 and had since then disappeared. He had fallen victim with several thousands of French and immigrated Jews to the Nazi atrocities. It was only by chance and miracle that Bertl and her son Roger had escaped from the same fate. They had by now returned from their hiding place to Mulhouse where Bertl could occupy her former apartment with the store in the same building. We started at once to send twice a month as permitted packages, each 15 to 20 pounds and continued to do so with an uncounted number of parcels containing victuals for many, many months. Bertl also took advantage of the opportunity that our household goods were still stored in Basel. It was just to her convenience to ride to Basel and select for herself the choice pieces of our goods. It was by the way her third

inheritance from us. Bertl had started at once after her return to Mulhouse with an energy that has no comparison, to reopen the same store her husband had established just before the war and despite her deepest grief, achieved a fantastic commercial success. After many years she sold the business and lived several years in comfortable retirement. Bertl died on March the 8th 1965.

Two events accelerated the fulfilment of our desire to return to San Francisco. First I lost my job in a rather peculiar way. I must say that my ~~fellow workers~~ liked me as a friend and good co-worker. I was nearly a year on my job. As it was usually the case we didn't know much about each other's private life; we were known by our ~~first names~~ only. Well-nigh all of my co-workers were German descendants and educated in America which was for most of them their native land. However the schools they had preferably visited were suspiciously marked by German nationality. On Saturday was no work at the plant. The first day of Roshhashana fell on Shabbath, the 8th of September 1945 and Monday the 17th of September was Jomkippur where the largest part of Jewish enterprises was closed. I took of course leave of absence for this one day. The next day shortly before 8 o'clock I reported back for work. When I entered the large working hall most of the men and women were already there waiting for the stroke of the clock. As soon as they saw me they shouted in unison from everywhere repeatedly "Monday, -Monday!" That was the short circuit of our friendship. Even the foreman had joined them and took notice of my presence as little as possible. In fact everybody avoided me. The man standing beside me as a second cutter on his own machine so far an agreeable co-worker found fault with me and said: "Now we know who you are!" I answered him that I did not change and that I was the same honest man today as I was before. But that they may blame themselves on account of their prejudice and bigotry. It is useless to fight against the stupidity of the that marks anti-Semitism. The best is to go out of their way like meeting a wild beast in the woods. The next Friday I gave short notice of my intention to quit my work. There were no other Jews at work in the plant.

The second incident was the loss of our lease on our apartment. The landlord needed our flat for his son who was about to marry. We were given notice to move on the first of December. In agreement with dear Mutti nothing could divert us from our plan to leave the

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inhospita<sup>ble</sup> city and return to San Francisco. I started with wrapping and packing our household goods without delay. To my greatest surprise our dearest Hannele had decided in favor of remaining in Minneapolis. The reason was twofold :first to learn more in her job and secondly to be independent for a while. To be separated from our beloved Hannele was an idea that struck me as cold as the icy winds in the middle West. But there was a justification in her plan to stay behind in Minneapolis and hard as it was in the moment to decide upon I agreed and so did dear Mother. Towards the end of November everything was ready for shipment. Hannele had rented a furnished room with a nice Jewish Family.

On Thanksgiving day ,Thursday the 29th of November 1945 accompanied by Hannele we rode to the railroad station and then -- we left Minneapolis and St. Paul for good. Mutti and I were greatly excited. Why all the excitement? Well, ~~our~~<sup>the</sup> travel-plan we had in mind provided us with the finest opportunity to meet our dear Son again and enjoy a few days together for the first time since April 1939. We could realize our traveling via Canada because we could "show off" with our citizen<sup>ship</sup> papers. On Friday forenoon we arrived in Winnipeg-Canada. We were awaited by our good Son Max and it stands as a matter of course that our welcome greeting was filled with heartfelt joy. Max ~~made the best of it by arranging~~<sup>had</sup> everything for us as comfortable as possible. Both Mutti and I were deeply impressed by the many invitations we received from Max'friends. It was an honor for Max as well as for his parents. A few days later we proceeded on our journey to the west coast. Canada was in the deep winter season like the State of Minnesota. By railroad we crossed through the most beautiful scenery of the Canadian Rockies. We arrived on a rainy day in the big city of Vancouver. We changed trains and continued to Seattle where we interrupted our traveling. We brought the greetings of Weiller's, who had urgently asked for it, to their near relatives. We were invited to stay for the night at their roomy house. Then we proceeded from Seattle via Portland to Oakland /California. We were awaited by one of Florli's girl friends whom she had befriended while working together in the same household in San Francisco. Florli had been in correspondence with her. Apartments were very hard to get. Therefore we were really grateful that we found through her kind arrangement with the manager of that large building a lodging for us, at least for the time being. WE

passed the rest of December as if being on vacation.

At the beginning of January 1946 we tried in vain to find an apartment in San Francisco. When a double flat at the Oak Street <sup>East</sup> near corner Baker St. was offered for sale we bought the building supported by a bank loan. On Sunday evening the third of February we moved in and took possession of the lower flat vacated by the former owner. There were five rooms, a kitchen with dinette and pantry and a modern bathroom. In the basement was the laundry installed, a workshop with storage space and two heating plants for the front and rear rooms each. There was a large backyard also. The upper flat contained six rooms, a kitchen with pantry and a fine bathroom. The flat was rented at a low price.

After we had settled down we turned our attention to find work. Florli was a great success; she was accepted by the Union as a bookbindery girl and her skill paid good dividends in wages of her trade. In contrast to Florli I encountered great difficulties in search for a job. To despair is always a mistake; it disturbs the mind and you find fault with everything around you. One day, by visiting several establishments of my line, I found by chance work at a printing and paperbox plant in the shipping department and as an auxiliary cutter. I was admitted to the trade Union and got good wages exceeding by far those received in Minneapolis <sup>and</sup> ~~Sota~~.

After one year of absence our dear Hannele returned to us to our great joy from the mid-West. Pretty soon she started to work as a dresscutter and made the best earnings of <sup>10-3 1/2</sup> ~~us three~~. Hannele occupied for herself the fine sunny room with the exit to the backyard. She was indeed our lovely and most appreciated tenant in the house paying voluntarily for board and room. In the following year, 1947, Max had passed his examination at the college of Winnipeg and received his bachelor degree. To continue with his study he wished to immigrate to the United States and enter the famous university at Berkeley/California. At that time I worked in the factory at night and found the necessary time during the day to procure the manyfold immigration papers for him. This time we furnished ourselves the affidavits. Besides, Max got through his Parents, being citizens according to the immigration laws, first preference to enter this country. And thus he finally joined us to our greatest joy in the States. He arrived in San Francisco on 11th of September 1947. After being for a month with us, he moved to Berkeley to

avoid the considerable waste of time traveling forth and back. Max remained at Berkeley for two years and concluded his study<sup>3 2 1</sup> with the fall semester<sup>1949</sup>, received his master's degree. Then he moved to Norman/Oklahoma where he was employed as an instructor in the department of modern languages. In 1953 Max also received joyfully the American citizenship-papers. He remained in Norman for five years to the end of the semester<sup>1954</sup>.

In the year 1948 I undertook a major remodeling job of the upper flat. This unprofitable large apartment was divided into two handsome dwellings; the one to a four room and the other to a three room apartment. The front of the house was also rebuilt and covered with asbestos shingles. To pay for the expenses I had to enlarge the existing first mortgage. Since the house was on a sound financial base and the income much improved, the debt on the house was in a few years amortized. We had a satisfactory return and besides a free apartment for ourselves. Two spare rooms of our flat were also rented for many years.

On Sunday, the 14 th of March 1948 our dear Hannele as a lovely bride and Gary Haas as a stately bridegroom were married at the Beth Israel synagogue. Gary as our dear Son-in-law turned out to be a sympathetic character whom we learned to like, to love and to appreciate very much. But the mainpoint was that he was a congenial husband to our daughter and that both of them were much in love ~~to with~~ each other. To give away a deeply loved daughter even into marriage is a difficult task for a father. But thus is the inevitable progress of life. ~~and when we can't~~ <sup>we can't</sup> thankful for the way as it is. Pretty soon after their wedding they rented on the upper story the sunny four room apartment. On the 7th of March 1953 our lovely Granddaughter Debbie was born. We all had the greatest joy to have this vivid and exceedingly pleasant child around us. However, it was not the case right after her birth. She was born with a deficiency of her breathing which needed two operations during the first two years of life in order to correct it. For the Mother and the child and for all of us it was a time of great anguish. Many times the young life seemed to be clinging to a weak thread only. But the heartfelt love, the unfaltering patience, and the most careful attention, all of them only a Mother can give, made it possible to be victorious in the end. I have many pleasant memories as a baby-sitter with the lovely maiden, enjoying life and turning somersaults. The times have

indeed not disappeared that Heaven does wonders.

In 1949 the company where I was employed transferred its plant to a town near Oakland and I gave up my job. I worked thereafter six months in a smaller plant with a similar outfit. On account of my age being near sixty, ~~years old~~ the boss regretted that he had to give me a week's notice to avoid my seniority rights as a permanent worker. Thus was the rule of our trade union. After a longer time of unemployment I found just by chance an opportunity to start as a mail-and stock-clerk with an old established fire insurance company, <sup>Norwich</sup> in downtown San Francisco. Of course my salary fell far behind my wages as a ~~as a~~ skilled worker of my trade. Yet it was a steady job which I relinquished only after nearly ten years of service, shortly before my seventieth birthday 1960. A short time before dear Florli had also concluded her career as a bookbindery-girl. The life of retirement had now begun for both of us.

Life doesn't pass without surprises. To our great astonishment we received one day shortly before the closing of the 1954 term at the university of Norman a letter from our dear Son reporting that he had firmly decided to change his studies in order to prepare for the rabbinate. In fact, he had studied since a longer time for this purpose. Now he announced that he had passed the preliminary examinations for the admission at the Hebrew Union College of Cincinnati / Ohio. He started as an ardent student in fall 1954. His deeply rooted inward reflection upon man's misery on his path as a human being stirred up his desire for action as a Rabbi.

One lucky event seldom comes alone. On Sunday the 14th of July 1957 we celebrated here in San Francisco his wedding with his selected, lovely bride Rebecca. The ceremony was performed at the Emanuel synagogue. The magnificent wedding festival at the famous St. Francis hotel will be remembered by all for many years to come.

In the following year, Max had mastered his study within four years instead of the usual five years, with great distinction. For the ordination as a Rabbi, Max had invited us to be present and moreover had provided us with a generous contribution to our planned journey to the East. For the first time, Mutti and I experienced a beautiful flight by plane to New York. We took our time to explore this big and astounding city. We were greeted and heartily welcomed by our friends from the old country who lived in New York or in its vicinity. After a few days we proceeded with our travel to Cincin -

nati where Max ,Rebecca ,and to our surprise, our Hannele, also were present at the railroad station. On Friday evening, the 6 th of June 1958 the consecration service was performed in the chapel of the college in presence of the President, the Professors, and a large gathering of friends and relatives of the twenty candidates. Each of them received his credentials as Rabbi. Our Max was further distinguished by two awards. On the next day a solemn Shabbath service was held in a beautiful synagogue of the city. In pursuance of the service, the guests were invited to a delicious lunch. Max was later elected as Rabbi by the congregation B'nei Chaim of Cumberland /Md., a more than hundred years old kehillah. In June 1963 Max had the great honor to receive at the Hebrew Union College the degree as Doctor of Hebrew letters. We all participated in his big joy about his well earned distinction.

Gary too had distinguished himself as a young business executive in large commercial enterprises and had specialized as expert of tariff-rates in the transport-business. He was awarded and recognized by a diploma. Later on he entered the service of the State of California in the same capacity. In 1957 Gary and Hannele bought a nice home of their own at the Lawton St. I lost my best tenants I ever had. On third of March 1959 we acquired a home for ourselves, located only two blocks away from our dear ones, at Judah St. A few months later, dear Florli needed an operation. We all were overjoyed when she came through unscathed. In December 1959 we sold the building at the Oak St.

Two great events of gladness occurred to us with the birth of two grandchildren in addition to our beloved Debbie. On the 19 th of December 1958 Liriam "das liebe gute Kind," as the Daughter of Max and Rebecca, was born in Cumberland, and on the 19 th of August 1959 Jeffrey, as son of Gary and Hannele was born in the fair city of San Francisco. All three Grandchildren, thanks Heaven, are a source of unending joy to us as Grandparents.

Speaking of joyful occurrences in our life in America in the past, one of them each year, stands out like a monument. That is our vacation time with Max. He had bought himself an auto and for many years, before his marriage, he passed his vacation-time with us. While the larger part of it was dedicated to his studies, two weeks were set apart as our common holiday for our enjoyment. We visited the most beautiful places in our Country's National Parks to refresh mind and

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body. At the same time we became acquainted with large sections of the United States. The rural life in the cabin with kitchen utilities, with dear mutti's expert cooking and Max, passing the nights outdoors in his sleeping bag and vagabonding with us during the day, - - all this and many small things which occurred occasionally to our joy, were of such great impression to us that it forms an inseparable part of our adventures as newcomers in America. Max's magnificent performance of love to his parents accomplished indeed more than anything else to reconcile us with an upset world, by bringing us nearer to the splendor of Nature.

My records "The life as a venture" are only a compressed story which I have given in the preceding pages, avoiding lengthy details. To summarize, I may repeat that I lived twenty years, 1919-1939, in in Loerrach /South West Germany. It was the longest stretch of time I spent in one community of Germany, even three years longer than in the city of my birth. In those twenty years I endeavored after a reputation as a man of integrity in my dealing with Christians and Jews alike, as my forefathers have done. I strove above all to gain a deeper insight in Judaism as manifested in our sacred Scriptures and in the writing of temporary scholars. There is nothing to brag about since it is a matter of course for a Jew who wants to sanctify his life. "Behold, the fear of the Lord is wisdom and to depart from evil is understanding" (Job 28, 28) I have not to write a long story to illustrate it. Why then did I give an account at all? To give thanks to the Divine Providence that safely guided the fate of my family and myself. It is to show that faith in the everlasting compassion of the Eternal with the fragile man is a strong fortress in the vicissitudes, the turmoil and the upheaval of times. It comes to the fore when I think of the times of my youth, when I was a soldier in the first World war, reveals itself in the most delightful colors as one reads, how I happened to find my beloved bride as a comrade of life. It finds expression in the time when sinister forces engulfed Germany and I survived with my family despite the cruelties in the Concentration camp. It is emphasized in our miraculous escape in the very nick of time from Germany and over and above how we overcame miraculously the obstacles on our journey to America - - and many other incidents too numerous to enumerate them all.

There are two occurrences in our life time which left their



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imprints in the path of man's history. I mention first the convention of the "Ecumenical Council" set up "to consider and to update the Catholic-Jewish relations". This phrase was chosen for the Catholic world as if its hierarchy was set up to pass revue on its ~~wild~~ relationship toward the Jews in order to erase from the gospel the tenets that led to the shameful acts against humanity throughout the centuries. But, alas, it was nothing more than the construction of a tribunal to wash their hands in innocence as always after each new wave of crime against the Jews, and to appease the qualms of their conscience. It has not wiped off once and for all the ominous accusations which led to the downfall of man fabricating the poisonous state of mind that produced the terrible crime of monstrous dimensions. The Ecumenical Council in its final declaration simply "deplores" the inhuman effect without tearing out the poisonous roots. That indeed is deplorable. But now after the Nazi-holocaust that tops, as it were, the efforts of nearly 1900 years of the Christian church, Catholic and Protestant alike, in its cruel relations toward the Jews and was exploited by the nazis as the Churches' henchman, I daresay, by the extirpation of the European Jewry, What does it mean now when the "Holy See" thinks it is deplorable? It adds mockery to cruelty. Yea, if the Christian clergy would have have considered its "Jewish problem" at the end of the 19th century when Jew-baiting was ~~at~~ an heinous rite and had really meant it to ennoble their religious character by their attitude toward the Jews, then the human race would not have soiled itself in such an unspeakable manner between 1933 - 1945. Now it is too little and too late, "may the Council "deplore" it or not.

There are those among the Jews who neither learn from the past nor do they bother to win knowledge of the Torah. They try to forget ~~the~~ even lessons history has taught them. To them, the Ecumenical Council has opened a new era of "better" understanding, of mutual appreciation and of friendly coexistence. Nothing could be farther away from the truth. The upper ranks of the clergy do neither hide nor change their feeling. The reason for this is obvious. The fathers of the Church, the founders of the faith, knew very well what they were doing, as they fertilized their new religion by taking the riches of Judaism and re-inforced it through the hatred of Jews, to a strong unsolvable concret. That is fundamental! As a Jewish commentator has said referring to Matthew 27, 24/25: "This is one of the passages

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which have been responsible for oceans of human blood and a ceaseless stream of misery and desolation."In this way also we have to comprehend ,hard as it seems to be, that the "pious" leaders of robbery , murder and cruelty against Jews were lifted often enough to the standard of "saints", on account of the "holiness" of their religious faith and creed. This ,I dare say, could have happend even to the furious of Germany also, if he had acted "in a faithful mania" as a Catholic as he was against the Jews only. But this scroundel at this time overshot the goal. (Schwartz)

As it was in times of old so it is today :The Christian Church has the recipe ready mixed for instant use to remedy the Jewish problem and that spells - - conversion. A Jew who does it has turned in my eyes to a despicable traitor whose trait is a vessel of stink. (Charakter-Zug)

Beware of the lure and hoax ,oh, remnant of Israel, Search your Scriptures and know yourselves. Wait and hope and pray for the day of fulfilment for the salvation to come for the sake of mankind. Be of good courage .Keep out of a mad society of any kind. Move away from evil and do good and search for peace. ,as it was said.

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Now I come to the second occurrence: One of the greatest event in our time was the "Proclamation of the State of Israel" on the 14th of May 1948. A rebirth accompanied by terrific and awful throes. But more than that is the astounding miracle that this weak infant of a state succeeded to master the obstacles thrown against her at the beginning by hostile neighbors and by powerful nations under the sinister guidance of England. The world's diplomacy that roots of old in display of power and passionate egoism does not know such words as justice, righteousness, integrity, compassion or love. What does it mean that the victorious armies had fought the second World-war to eliminate barbarian dictators? It was nothing but ambiguous lip-service used as a camouflage. How can you explain otherwise their attitude against the unhappy refugees on the return to the ancient homeland? Imagine England's armada hunting on the seven seas the fragile vessels laden with Jewish men, women and children seeking to save their life in Israel?

On second of November 1917 the so-called Balfour declaration of England proposed the establishment of a Jewish National Home. It was an English trick to gain a foothold on Arabian soil with its oil wells. When the purpose was accomplished England rescinded the Balfour declaration and started on a war path against the Jews by stirring up the hostility of the Arabs that led to the attacks in 1921, 1929 and 1936<sup>etc.</sup> Trans-Jordan was cut off from Israel (Palestine) by the trickish machination of England. Moreover, England the friend of the U.S.A. turned a supporter of the Nazi's atrocities when the Colonial Department on 17th of May 1939 issued the "White Paper" abrogating the rights of the Jews to enter and settle at will in Palestine. This document of disgrace was kept in force for years to come with the vicious power of a bulldog.

On 29th of November 1947 the United Nations decided in favor of an "Independent Jewish State" by the majority of voters among them U.S.A. and Russia. Suddenly America under the influence of England and her own State department reversed herself to the shock of the civilized world. England wanted to annul the decision of the United Nations, wanted to block the coming historic event of the rebirth of Israel. England asked to set up, as <sup>the Rev.</sup> done scores of times before, commissions to decide about ridiculous questions. England's wish was to perpetuate a malicious circle. In the face of the iron will of Israel to stand its ground, England preferred to withdraw

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from her mandat. England was convinced that in the well prepared war the weak forces of a Jewish army could easily be crushed by the Arabs. Moreo<sup>England</sup>England had financed, trained, and kept under British command the Arab legion of Trans-Jordan. With the expiration of the English mandat<sup>the</sup>the Jewish statesmen announced to the World the "Proclamation of the State of Israel". The Arabs answered with war. U.S.A. was the first state to grant de facto recognition to the State of Israel - but likewise ambiguously flattered England by keeping an embargo of arms to the Middle-East while the Arabs received all necessary material of warfare from the perfide Britons or via England from America. For the Jews it was a war of liberation, a battle of life and death with the issue in the balance whether to be or not to be. The war was ended by an armistice. 1949 wavering up to date between peace and war. Please, read about the Sinai campaign of 1956 and the six day war in June 1967 as the victorious battles of survival.

The compressed sketch above may serve as an indicator to show how unreliable and fragile, how malignantly influenced the character of those are to whom nations have entrusted their welfare. Bigotry and hypocrisy take the place of humanity and its morals. The vacillation between the remote poles of good and bad shapes the world to a farcial theater. Behind the scenes pulls the devil faces.

For the "People of the Bible" the Ruler of man's destiny thrones in Heaven. The power of faith rescues those that trust in Him alone. As it is written "Exodus, Chapter 14, v. 14, The Eternal shall fight for you, but you shall keep your peace."

A man lives not by himself alone; he has the obligation to take notice and examine the proceedings in the world around him because he is subjected to it. What seems to be a deflexion of my theme becomes in reality a very part of it.



**End of Henry E. Seling Family  
Collection**

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